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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

BIG-GAME HUNTING IN NORTH-EASTERN RHODESIA

BY

OWEN LETCHER, F.R.G.S.

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THE BONDS OF AFRICA

Impressions of Travel and Sport from Cape Town to Cairo 1902–1912

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a c.

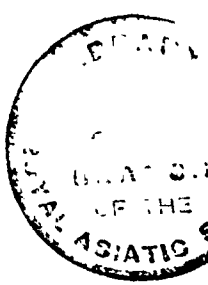
BY

OWEN LETCHER, F.R.G.S.

AUTHOR OF

"BIG-GAME HUNTING IN NORTH-EASTERN RHODESIA"

WITH FIFTY ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND A MAP



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THE BONDS OF AFRICA

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TO AFRICA

TO

"THE LEGION OF THE LOST ONES"

TO

"THE COHORT OF THE DAMNED"

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PREFACE

It has been my lot to travel over much of the Continent of Africa, and in these pages I have endeavoured to place on record some of my wanderings, to describe the wondrous beauties, scenes of savagery, old-world towns, and hordes of wild men and wild beasts which are still the treasures of the Last Continent.

For permission to reproduce certain articles and photographs contributed by me to the *Star* and *Illustrated Star*, *Sunday Post* and *Observer*, Johannesburg, *The State*, Cape Town, and the *African World*, London, I am indebted to the Editors of these papers. All the photographs appearing in this book were either taken by my native attendants or myself. The only claim I make for the work is that it is an honest attempt to describe the experiences, impressions and sensations of one who has truly felt the all-powerful influence and fascination of Africa in a multitude of highways and byways, from Table Bay to the city of the Pharaohs, and who has found in her bondage a serfdom glorious and strangely easy.

Johannesburg, 1913

THE BONDS OF AFRICA

CHAPTER I

IN THE BEGINNING—A PREAMBLE

OUT of the dim haze of the morning a faint blue ridge stood feebly up and relieved the monotony of that nebulous blending of sea and sky which is the daily vision of those who go down into the deep in ships. The white wings of the ocean broke before the steamer's bow and tumbled idly back again into the vast acreage of the waters as the ship sped towards the blur on the far-away line where ocean and clouds mingled—the blur that meant land. An hour went by and the ridge assumed the shape of a giant table with soft, fleecy clouds as a table-cloth. It looked as though its great flat top was pressed against the very floor of Heaven. A little while and white shapes clustering at the foot of the towering rock mass could be distinguished; they might have been crumbs fallen from the snow-white covering of the table. An hour later the anchor was dropping in the Cape Town roadstead; Table Mountain and Lion's Castle seemed to frown down a cold welcome, and the streets and houses and surroundings of the most southern port in Africa afforded the watchers on the decks cause for much interest and speculation. How did the railway scale that forbidding escarpment? What were the

lands that lay beyond? What was in store for each one of us in that vast continent of which only the sole lay bared to our emigrant eyes? What should we find there—fortune and favour and an abiding home? or ill luck, the dormitories of sickness, and perhaps a grave amidst the silence of the unknown? Who could tell? Who, could they know, would wish that the story of their future should be spelled out in the cold, cruel letters of Fate before their eyes? Some of us who stood that morning on the decks of the liner have found fame and riches in Africa. Some have dug deep graves and tumbled their reputations into them for hurried burial. And for some, other hands have delved that the pits might be deep enough. Some have remained, others have gone away harbouring deep wounds of regret, and then have returned.

What strange, all-powerful influence is there in Africa that draws men and women back to her?

For what do they return? Is it to regain the waking remnants of a dream once so sweet and seemingly so real? Do they go back to snatch from the fickle goddesses of Mammon and Life lost riches or health that has blown away like eider on a tempest?

I cannot tell. Maybe it is the great brooding stillness of the veld that has called them to the farm and lonely trading store. Others have been summoned by the far-away vastness of the interior, and the summons has brooked no refusal. To see the first blushes of the dawn steal over plain and forest and river; to watch the splendour of the young day flood mountain ranges and broad lakes with glory; to see the sun exultant in the cruelty of his mid-day strength hug the earth in an embrace of fire, or to rest one's eyes on

the soft glows and dying glamours of the dusk —these are things that are meet reward for beds of fever and the heartless ministerings of hardship.

To hear the night winds sobbing down the valleys; to listen to the trumpeting scream of an elephant or the majestic roar of the lion; to have the sounds of native revelry wafted on the still air to one's tent door—these are the relishes of existence.

Not only in the wilds does the spell of Africa grip one. Who that has travelled along the East Coast can forget the old-world beauty of Mozambique, the colour riot of Zanzibar, the verdure of the island of Mombasa against which the sapphire seas break in snow-white foam? If you have seen the illimitable sands of the Egyptian and Soudanese deserts, or from the Citadel watched the peace of eventide sink over Cairo; if you have drunk Nile water or day-dreamed below the mystic Sphinx—can you ever forget these things or turn their memories into the alleyways of the mind? And who that has hunted big game does not at times feel the passion of the chase and the surge of an almost irresistible wave of longing, years after those halcyon times when life was unfettered and the world seemed to be at one's feet?

Most of us are savages at heart. Deep down in the smug contentment of that hollow thing we call civilization there smoulder the fires of our Berserker ancestry. We wander in the great vast untrodden spaces of the world, and the dwindling flames blaze up in a furnace of primordial joy, the lusts of killing and freedom spurt up in tongues of barbaric flame. Man may become a savage again in the space of but a few years.

He may grow to detest the empty pleasures of a hollow world, the rush and hurry of our great cities will become phantoms of a ghastly nightmare, and there will stretch out before him a new path along the roadway of life, a path without the snares and pitfalls of the highway trodden by the multitudes.

There are few men who have turned from the beaten track in great, mysterious Africa who have not realized that the instincts of our Stone-age ancestors are not dead. They merely sleep; and there is no tract on earth wherein they are so easily awakened as in Africa.

It has been said of Africa that God raised His Hand in anger and cursed it with all the plagues of the universe. Yet here a man may find a true joy and bury many of the ghosts of the North lands, where the sky is grey and sullen and forbidding. Those to whom Africa calls rise from beds of sickness to answer her summons.

In this book the more modern and European cities of Africa find no place or description. Johannesburg is a wonder-town with as much romance and event crammed into its quarter of a century as any other place on earth. But it is not Africa any more than clean, well-built Durban is the Dark Continent. Gold mines and diamond mines have crushed out of some parts of the Last Continent much of her natural mysticism and savagery, and one will seek in vain in these pages for those monuments to Industry and Finance which modern man has erected in Africa by the sweat of his brow. For these things are recorded in the world's schoolbooks, and this is but a fairy tale of playground facts and fancies.

CHAPTER II

NORTH-WESTERN RHODESIA: THE STAGE OF NATURE

It was in 1904 that I won my first glimpse of the byways of Africa, and the few days that I spent around the little mining village of Haenertsberg in a mountainous region of the Northern Transvaal, where the land dives suddenly down into the fever-ridden haze of the low country, whetted my appetite for a longer sojourn in the lesser-known parts of the continent. Two years later the rolling, rumbling stage-coach bore me farther north to Tsama River on the edge of the Game Reserve, and it was then that I vowed to see the very shrine of savage Africa, and worship at the mysterious high altar to which so many have made a last pilgrimage.

Thus it was in 1907 I journeyed to Bulawayo, the Victoria Falls and Broken Hill, the then rail-head of the Cape to Cairo line.

How many people, I wonder, properly appreciate what Cecil John Rhodes, Alfred Beit, and those who have taken up the tasks of the two dead Empire-builders have already achieved in the colossal project of connecting up Cape Town with Cairo by rail? How many realize that you can to-day step into a comfortable train at Table Bay and that the metals on which those luxurious coaches run continue for 2,500 miles to the north, that within a week you will be in

the Congo Free State, and that the great country which only a few years ago was practically unknown, and which in several recent maps is styled "British Central Africa," has, under the name of North-Western Rhodesia, and under the mantle of Rhodes and his far-seeing statesmanship, become a great and valued dependency of the British Empire?

I will not dwell on Bulawayo, the modern metropolis of Matabeleland, raised up on the slaughter kraals of Lo Bengula, nor will I weary you with a lengthy description of the Victoria Falls, the Mecca of all South African tourists.

Many an able pen has attempted to describe the wondrous loveliness of the Falls, and where able pens have failed I can only hope to give the weakest conception of the Zambesi rushing over a great escarpment and then silently wending its way down the dark gorges in a twisting and twining path to the east. When first I saw the Zambesi the river was in full flood (in April and May), and the amount of water that was coming over the Falls then was too stupendous to calculate.

Standing on one of the ledges which run out from the Rain Forest and peering over into the depths beneath, one felt as if he were on the very edge of the world. The spray, the thunder of the waters, and the beautiful rainbow effects filled me with such awe that I turned away speechless and amazed. It was as if I were standing on the top of the highest ledge of the north cliffs of Cornwall, and the Atlantic had determined to destroy the land in a blind rage and fury. And there on the other side the sea had conquered, and the land was under the mighty hand of the conqueror.

THE VICTORIA FALLS, ZAMBESI RIVER, IN FULL FLOOD

[*To face p.* 18

THE DEVIL'S CATARACT, VICTORIA FALLS

At Livingstone I had to say good-bye to the luxurious Zambesi express, and started on the journey northwards in a less comfortable coach. There was no more of the dining-saloon luxury after Livingstone, and unless you would go hungry to Broken Hill it was necessary to lay in a good stock of food.

The Broken Hill train did not recognize time to any material extent, and there are cases on record of engine-drivers wounding buck and halting the " Congo Express " for two or three hours to hunt down their game, a practice most emphatically to be discouraged for many reasons.

Kalomo, then the seat of the administration of North-Western Rhodesia, was situated about three miles from the railway station, and a traveller's impressions of this " metropolis " gathered from a passing train were not very favourable. From all I could learn Kalomo was extremely unhealthy. It is built on a substratum of granite, which exists here chiefly in the form of small cups and depressions, and thus conserves water, mosquitoes and malaria. It is not altogether to be wondered at that the capital has since been removed to sandy Livingstone.

Early the morning after leaving Livingstone we were at the Kafue, gazing upon the broad and majestic river, over a quarter of a mile broad, and spanned by the longest bridge in Africa.

One cannot but have the highest admiration for the pluck, the energy, and the perseverance of those men who pushed the railway on from the Zambesi in the face of transport difficulties, fever, and a thousand and one other obstacles. But the work has been done, and sceptics, who regard the Cape to Cairo scheme as the hare-brained

conception of a parcel of insane conceivers, should see for themselves what already has been achieved, before they doubt what can be accomplished. Kafue at the time of my visit contained a number of fever patients. That terrible scourge of the country, blackwater, seemed to be very common there. On the river were a number of launches, and, as my companions were desirous of purchasing a boat for navigating the Luangwa River, which runs into the Zambesi at Feira, we went down to the grass- and reed-clad banks, and inspected the flotilla.

The dents in the sides of one or two of the boats told interesting stories of encounters with hippopotami, which are very plentiful in the Kafue and Luangwa.

It is a great pity that the Kafue is not navigable right up to the mines of the "Western Copper Group"—Sable Antelope, Silver King, Rhino, and Hippo properties—as it would greatly facilitate the opening up of these ventures, if it were. Still the river is certain to play an important part in the industrial history of the country.

The railway rises from an altitude of 3,000 feet to 4,000 feet between Kafue and Broken Hill, and the trees to the north of the river are notably taller and less bush-like than those to the south.

At one of the little wayside gangers' houses, which serve as stations, a man crawled on the train, and gave us children in a strange land a glimpse of what some of the North-Western pioneers have to bear. He was not an old man, when you came to look at him closely, by no means old, but his form was so emaciated by fever that one would at first sight have put him down to be sixty-five or seventy. His skin was yellow, his eyes wild with malaria, three fingers on one hand

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THE KAFUE RIVER, SPANNED BY THE LONGEST BRIDGE IN AFRICA

had been bitten off by a wounded lion, and his arm was festered with a great scab—another evidence of the lion's mauling ability. He was going to Broken Hill Hospital with his rifle, his blankets, and his water-bottle, and the sight of his sufferings somewhat damped my pioneer ambitions, which had been steadily rising for days.

Mwomboshi, a small station which then boasted of a native commissioner, police station, and magistrate, was soon passed, and about half-past five in the evening we were at Broken Hill, at that time the headquarters of the Northern Copper Company, and a busy little mining camp.

The world is after all extremely narrow, and before I had been in Broken Hill long, I had met an old Truro College boy, against whom I had often played football and cricket when at Probus in Cornwall.

Colonel Carden, commanding the stalwart Barotseland Police—who, by the way, were largely Angonis—had just come down from Katanga when I arrived in camp. He took a very keen interest in his corps, and was justly proud of his smart boys, who had recently given evidence of a strong musical trait, and formed a fife and drum band, which played outside the officers' mess at Kalomo every night.

I went on a mile or two past rail-head, and soon realized how utterly hopeless it was to attempt any shooting until the grass was burnt down.

I well remember my farthest north in South Central Africa on that occasion. Standing on a hillock, I could see over the sea of grass, dotted here and there with splendid trees, to a purple line on the horizon, where the land and the sky

seemed to kiss each other. There, to the north, was Cairo, behind me was Cape Town. The life desire of Rhodes was to link these two distant cities up, and standing there, 2,000 miles from the one and 3,000 from the other, I could not help forgetting big game and all else but the greatness of this man, who, had he lived, would have altered the map of all Africa, just as he changed the political charts of South Africa; whose greatest pleasure was to dream of his pet project, and who died all too soon for the British Empire in the Dark Continent. *Floreat Rhodesia!* If the man has gone, he has half a continent to keep his name living and to make his fame eternal.

Over three years went by, and again I crossed the great, yawning gorge into which the Zambesi falls, as though to lose itself for ever. Again I was borne across the broad expanse of the noble Kafue, and as night fell the twinkle of lights told me that Broken Hill had been reached.

It was a different Broken Hill to that which I had seen but forty months before. Grass grew in the calciner station; there was no sign of life on the kopjes; the gaunt rocks of zinc and lead stood up as the tombstones of an ill-starred venture.

I did not stay in Broken Hill long. Tales of great herds of game towards M'Kushi induced me to get together a little "ulendo," or caravan; and three nights after I had stepped off the train I was camped by the M'Lungushi river, watching the smoke from my pipe trail upwards towards the glorious moon.

Kwamwendo, my hunter boy, soon found game; and Sing Sing water-buck, Lichtenstein's harte-beeste, and reed-buck fell to my rifle. Here was

a delightful shooting country, with broad green "dambos" or clearings lying amidst a thin-leafed forest. Rivulets coursed through rich green grass, and in the morning the first majesty of the sun fell on a myriad of little dewdrops and made them glisten like jewels in the regalia of a king. Birds chirped, and soft breezes sighed and sobbed through the tree-tops. At night I pitched my wandering tent in native villages and listened to the pagan music of the simple savages who surrounded me, Walonga and Walenje.

No one who has witnessed it can ever forget the solemn glory of a moonlight night in these forest lands which cover so much of Africa north of the Zambesi—and, be it remembered, true Africa only begins when the waters of the great mother-river of the south have been crossed. On such a night I was camped at Luvembe's village in the Walonga country, and as I puffed silently at my pipe and the full splendour of the mellow light of the moon mingled with the glow of the camp-fires, I listened to the shouts of the children of the continent squatting all around me —the happiest race of mankind. There was an abundance of meat in camp, for that morning I had shot a Sing Sing water-buck and a harte-beeste, and long strips of flesh were smoking over each pile of blazing logs. Presently my "capitao," or headman—a cheerful old fellow who hailed from the Zambesi—approached me and asked if I objected to a dance being held. I readily acquiesced, and after the necessary pre-liminaries had been arranged and a little space had been cleared of wood, skins and cooking-pots between the camp-fires, I sauntered over to watch the proceedings. And never have I gazed on a more curious sight, or one more

fantastic in the absolute abandon of its savagery, than that night dance of the Walonga.

Picture to yourself a number of groups of women, with babies at breast and knee, squatting round the blazing fires. Here the old chief of the village is solemnly puffing at his huge pipe, fashioned out of clay, a long reed and a cucumber-shaped calabash. A stalwart M'Longa steps into the little open space between the fires, and alternately brandishes his spear above his head and wriggles his body round like a dying snake, to the accompaniment of a clapping of hands. Two huge "N'goma," or war-drums, consisting of skins stretched tight and laced over the hollowed-out trunks of trees, are brought forward, and after being duly warmed by the fires, are thumped by many pairs of hands. The sound emitted is musical and dull, yet it travels for an extraordinary distance. Two more Walonga now join the performer in the arena, and, keeping time with his fantastic movements, they look in the lurid glow of the flames as though they were loosed from Hades. Faster and faster beat the drums, faster and faster do the dancers sway their bodies and slice the air with the broad blades of their assegais. At last the thud of the drums stops abruptly and the dancers retire exhausted to the ring of spectators.

A few seconds of silence elapse, and then some one commences one of those singularly monotonous yet beautiful native refrains, whereof the chorus is hurled back like the rolling of thunder.

A clear, well-toned voice shouts out that to-morrow the "Bwana"* is going to kill a buffalo, and there will be "nyama sambele" (much meat); the answer comes from a score or two

* Master.

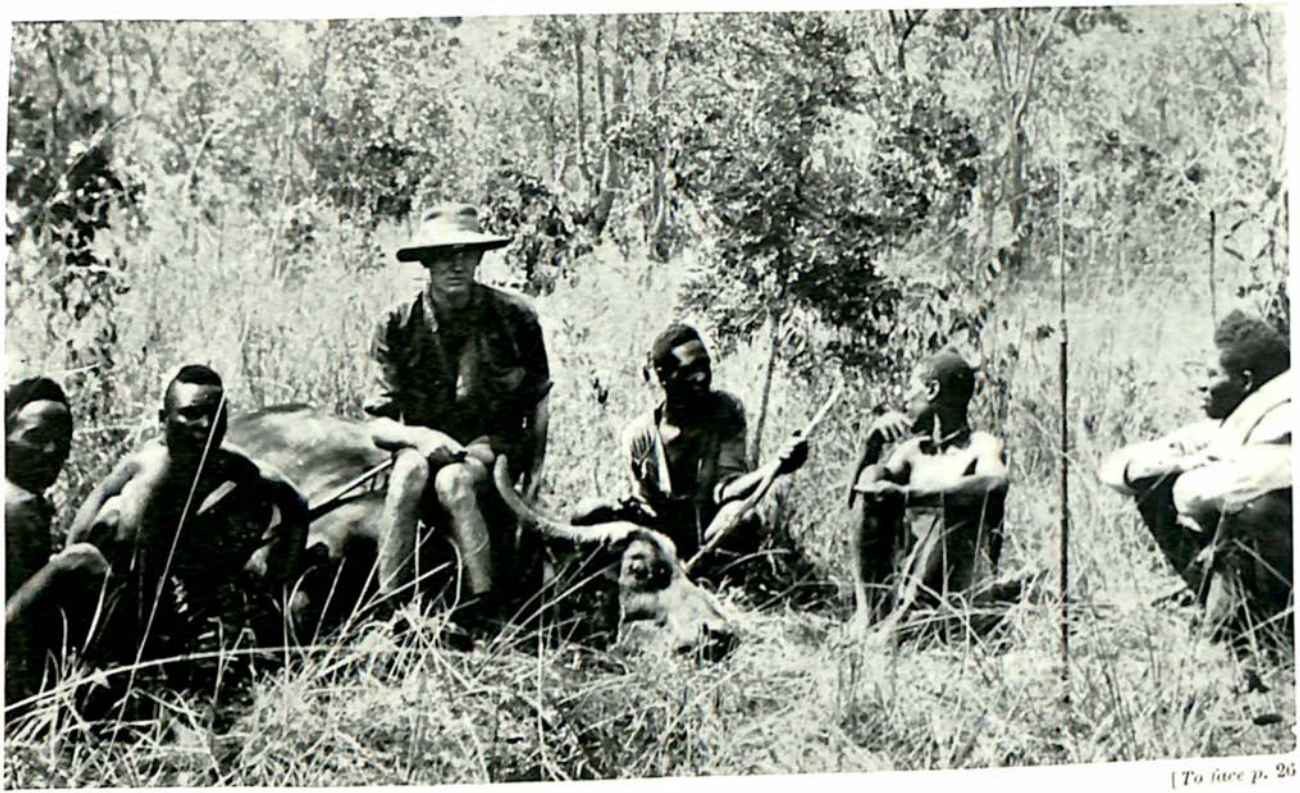
of strong lungs, and breaks on the air after the single voice like the ninth wave on a rock-bound coast—"Yes, the Bwana will kill a buffalo!" For long the haunting melody of this refrain fell on my ears, and then the dancers again broke into a maddened swirl wherein passion and lust were the keynotes of the rhythm. Then again a chant concerning the wild beasts of the forest and the "dambo," or clearing in the bush, and afterwards a play in which the dramatis personæ were two Walonga hunters and two other natives, the one with my water-buck horns on his head and the other with a similar headgear in the shape of a hartebeeste skull and horns. Round and round crept the pseudo-antelopes; and round and round them crept the hunters with spears upraised and ready to kill. At last one Nimrod came up silently behind the water-buck and thrust at him with the great blade gleaming in the fire-light. Down fell the actor, still clenching his horns, and he grovelled and rolled as his slayer plunged again at him with the assegai. The hartebeeste shared a similar fate, and then a roar of applause burst from the onlookers, especially from the direction of the women and children, who evidently thought this the *pièce de résistance* of the entertainment. Once more Luvembe's people broke into a chant, and then the drums beat fast and furious, and then silence, all-pervading and absolute; and presently the moon looked down on a cluster of grass-thatched huts and a score of calico-clad forms huddled together 'twixt logs and ashes, for the night was a cold one. I wended my way back to my tent and fell asleep, but not before I seemed once again to see the writhing bodies half enveloped in the flames, and once again to hear the roar of

many voices and the dull, insistent undertone of the drums.

Primitive and crude, indeed, was the night's exhibition, but true in its pagan representation of passion and lust. Brute passion is typified in savage man, and perhaps in civilized man as well; it is an inheritance which has been brought down through all the ages; to create and to kill are desires which have survived all the influences of progress.

Many of the dances which have roused the theatres of Europe to unparalleled heights of enthusiasm are merely the dance of the Walonga without the camp-fire or the assegais or the naked figures. Instead there are the stage-lights and decapitation and butterfly wings. But if you could have seen the abandon of Luvembe's people that night and heard the haunting beat of the drums and the weird choir of the village, you, too, would have thought that this night dance was far more fantastic, far more striking, far more likely to remain in memory that any execution that has drawn forth raptures from the crowd. It was, in fact, a passion play staged in every detail in accordance with its primitive savagery, and acted in keeping with the reality of its stage.

As day came stealing over bush and plain and hillock, I was marshalling my carriers together preparatory to a long day's tramp after buffalo. These magnificent great beasts—"God's cattle," as the Matabele used to call them—roam in great numbers on the Congo-Zambesi watershed. One large herd had been wandering around between the Mwomboshi and M'Lungushi rivers for three or four years, and after a day's search my hunter boys picked up the spoor of these animals. Hours and hours of tramping brought us up



[*To face p.* 26

BUFFALO COW AND NATIVE HUNTERS

with the herd the next day. The bush was exceedingly dense; and when I wounded an animal and it got away we began to anticipate trouble, for a wounded buffalo in dense cover is as nasty a customer as one can wish for. An old bull—in fact a buffalo of either sex which has arrived at years of discretion and cunning favours this plan of campaign when wounded—will often double back on his tracks and charge his pursuer in the rear. Frequently the buffalo gets a deal the better of the game, and becomes hunter instead of quarry with a vengeance. However, this particular animal did not give us much trouble, as I got in a couple of shots in the lungs shortly afterwards, which brought the day's sport to a rapid finish.

That night the great herd walked right by my camp. It was a direct challenge, and my hunter boys, led by the ever-energetic Kwamwendo, picked up fresh tracks just as the soft mellow light of first day was robing the forest in a delicate sheen of splendour. Before many minutes had elapsed we saw great, black bodies feeding in a "dambo" and leisurely sauntering towards the bush. Ere they entered I crept up to within sixty or seventy yards of a couple standing by themselves and gazing curiously in my direction. Singling out the bull, I let him have a 270-grain bullet behind the shoulder. He made off for the friendly shelter of some mopani trees, bellowing with pain and rage, but before he got there I hit him twice more, and he fell over on his side and breathed his bovine last.

Next morning I was again afoot very early, and after a couple of hours' spooring came up with the herd in the heart of the forest. The vegetation was extremely dense, but after a

great deal of peering I singled out what I judged to be a good bull—I could distinctly see a very fair spread of horns. The bullet hit with a telling "vup," and I heard that low, moaning bellow which a wounded buffalo invariably gives vent to. No animal fell, however, and the whole herd stampeded away with a thunder of hoofs that shook the earth. We ran along the tracks, and now and then the keen eyes of my native hunters singled out a leaf with a few tell-tale drops of blood on it. But after a while the blood spoor ceased, and we decided that we must have over-run the tracks of the wounded animal.

I thought of taking things easily for a while, lit up a pipe, handed my rifle to a gun-bearer, and casually sauntered along. Suddenly there was a crashing in the bushes, and out dashed the wounded animal, head upthrust, nostrils blazing furnace red, the very incarnation of diabolical fury. Kwamwendo, who carried my spare rifle, cleared off in one direction; the wretched bearer, with my old pet ·375, dashed off in another; the buffalo turned on me, and, defenceless, I bolted for all I was worth.

Thorns with the talons of a lammergeyer possessed no terrors for me then, and I don't know what might have happened had not Kwamwendo —in some degree, I suppose, repentant—fired at the infuriated brute with my falling block gun. The buffalo then made towards him, and my bearer summed up sufficient pluck to throw me my rifle. I managed to administer the death-blow without very much more difficulty, and found my prize was a cow carrying a good head.

On my way back to camp that day I came across a smaller herd of buffalo—probably a detachment of the main army of the beasts—and

added yet one more magnificent trophy to the bag. This latter head I presented to the Bulawayo Museum.

As bearing on the important question of tsetse fly and the alleged dependence of the fly on big game, and particularly on the buffalo, it will doubtless be of interest to mention that whilst hunting this great herd of buffalo near Mwomboshi I saw only two tsetse flies in five days; whereas twenty miles to the west of Mwomboshi and at a lower altitude, where no traces of buffalo were to be observed, I found tsetse painfully plentiful.

Every one in this world has his own particular and peculiar tastes, his own fairest scenes, his own most beautiful pictures. A merry supper party at the Savoy may represent one man's acme of bliss, to sit on some high-perched pinnacle and watch the Atlantic breakers hurled on to a rock-bound coast may be another's. But there surely cannot be a more grand or sublime thing in this world than the break of day over some wild yet inexpressibly lovely spot in the by-paths of Central Africa, where all is true and natural, as Creation intended things to be, as free from artificiality as was the Garden of Eden.

Picture to yourself such a scene. It is dawn. Across the eastern sky shafts of yellow light are brightening the sombre night shroud of the heavens, and as each shaft gains in that soft glow which heralds the morning, the twinkling stars become less and less distinct, the trees take on forms out of the disappearing dusk, the mounds and ant-heaps loom up like small mountains, the night-birds cease their callings, and the first twitterings of the day commence. Cold and damp

feels the air, but its freshness is as the freshness of the tender green blades which are springing up amidst the burnt stubble of the "dambo," wet with dew. Presently the shafts of light dissipate before the flush of the whole sky, the first blush of the rising sun. Now the huge seed-vessels of the kigelia trees stand out boldly against the fast-brightening background, the bushes throw off their phantom-like shrouds, and there beyond them is a great herd of roan antelope peacefully grazing the tender blades of green, slowly wending their way down to the little river to drink their fill before the sun is high and they retire to the friendly shade and cover of the bush. In the yet dim light their salmon-tinted coats look half white, half delicate pink; but presently the horns of an old bull are clearly distinguishable as he raises his stately, maned neck and, ever suspicious of the light of day, turns his black-and-white muzzle round sharply and gazes for the first time that day on his enemy, man.

Whether it be that the eyes of wild game are of poor value to them in the dim light of dawn, or whether the night has lulled them into some sense of security (unless, indeed, the prowling, hungry lion has made their darkness a night of terror), I do not know, but the fact remains that at early dawn it is often a matter of ease to approach a herd of buck in the open so closely and so openly that one wonders whether some strange paralysis has not come over them.

Presently the old bull roan snorts loudly and sharply, and then he raises a foreleg and stamps the ground, actions born of curiosity and fear, combined with, perhaps, in the case of the sable and roan antelopes, a certain mingling of anger. Suddenly he wheels round and moves off at a

BUFFALO HUNTING IN NORTH-WESTERN RHODESIA. A FINE BULL

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A PUKU SHOT NEAR THE GREAT LUKANGA SWAMP

sharp gallop. With him tear the other bulls, the cows and the little members of the herd, but only for a hundred yards or so, for presently the whole troop turn round again and curiously gaze at the breakers of their morning peace.

The whole sky is now flooded in glory. Away on the edge of the bush a number of ungainly Lichtenstein's hartebeeste are feeding, and between them and the roan are a few sable antelope cows. The old sable bull you will now see is running with the roan; a few minutes earlier the light was not sufficient to enable one to determine his handsome black form and great, sweeping horns. Brighter and brighter becomes the sky, the "dambo" takes on its life of day, birds of few notes fly and twit across the little river, the buck all approach the fringe of the bush, the sun peeps over the tops of the forest land to gaze once more on the fair picture of Africa, natural and wild as she has ever been, unsullied by the taint of civilized man; another day has come to bathe earth and sky and plain and forest in the rich glow of the African sun.

The heirs to Nature's wonders are those who wander with her through the wilds. To my mind such a scene as I have attempted to describe in the foregoing is worth all the masterpieces of drama and opera performed in all the great theatres of Europe. All the world's a stage, 'tis said. Nature's scenery was painted by God, staged on the magnificent scale of Creation before puny man belittled the glory of the effort, and there are no actors on the stage of Nature. They are the real exponents of unaffected life without its rehearsals, without the narrow wings of modern life or the cruel, glaring footlights of the up-to-date world.

After hunting the buffaloes I wandered away to the south-west, to the Lukanga and towards the Copper Mines. North-western Rhodesia has pretensions to being a mining country, and here one may come across the prospector—another human anachronism with the fever microbes of *Wanderlust* in his blood.

This is a type of man who flees from the never-ceasing advance of civilization as the gull flies from the oncoming blast of an Atlantic gale. You will find him driven away into the nooks and crannies of this callous earth of ours, always hopeful, though seared with the furrows of privation, always chasing the phantom of a golden reef, which should he find it will lure him back to the paths of his fellow-men for a while, and will rend and tear him and drive him back to his lonely byway.

Perhaps you will pity him his lot. You may forget that so soon as his hands are closed on the will-o'-the-wisp which he has spent the best years of his life in following across the marshes of sickness, poverty, and solitude, just so soon will the gold lose its glamour. He will wander away to some great, greedy city, whose people are lustful of his gold, but who never dare to cross the mountains and delve for it in the hard, relentless quartz, or to wash out the yellow grains from the dry, burning sand of some waterless African "river." If you will follow the fortunes of the man, you will see him one day scowling a glad farewell to the happy idol of his hardest days. He will resolutely turn his back on the bars and the music-halls and the twinkling lights of what the world calls pleasure.

A few weeks later, and he is once more toiling under the burning rays of the sun, digging little

pits, constructing a primitive windlass out of bush timber, and with the help of a few rude savages making for himself the unlovely beginnings of a Central African home. A few bundles of sticks, a quantity of rank grass stalks, and some mud from a half-dried-up water-hole are all he needs for a house, which in his heart of hearts he prefers to the gilded palaces of the mighty. The furniture—if it might so be called—is well in keeping with the simple barbarity of the walls and the covering which must, during the rainy months, protect him from tropical downpours and barely endurable heat. A couple of dynamite boxes, a broken-down stretcher bed, a few skins, a rough table made out of a packing-case, a few plates and pans and a rifle—these are all the possessions of this man, a true type of the pioneers of industry, who so often go down into a little grave dug by some faithful native, unhonoured and unknown.

A few miles north of his camp there may lie a range of rugged hills, their rocky pinnacles unadorned by bush or tree. Evening after evening the prospector will sit on one of his dynamite boxes and watch the smoke from his pipe waft gently away towards their frowning crests, and evening after evening as the sun dies in that crimson glory, which only those who live with Nature can really learn to love and look for, he will ponder on the untold possibilities of the lands beyond, where the noises of the pick and the shovel and the dynamite cartridge have never been heard.

In the course of a little while that pondering will change into a yearning to know what a journey over the rugged range may bring forth. Each evening the yearning will become more

intense, and there will soon arrive a day when the camp will be deserted, and the prospector will be eagerly trudging up the bush-clad slopes of the mountains, his senses quickened by the thought that by midday he will have scaled the barrier to its summit, and will see below him that land which is to make his fortune and repay him for his years of toil and hardship. At last the crest is reached, and there, rolling away in a boundless wealth of forest and plain, is what his eyes have longed to see for many, many days of discontent.

Once again this man, who cannot live within the narrow confines of orthodox life, builds himself a resting-place; once again a range of hills thrusts itself on his nomadic mind.

There is no word in the English language which adequately expresses this all-absorbing passion for knowledge of what lies on "the other side." The Germans call it *Wanderlust*, and should you roam much over the vast continent of Africa, you will find that many are smitten with this limitless fascination. Men have been known to tramp across a waterless desert with the agonies of fever racking every nerve and limb in an attempt to still this subtle spirit. But it is never stilled, and, so long as the world has unknown spaces, it will survive and continue to lure on men until their final journeys are completed, and they die with a mountain mocking them in their last moments, or the final dawn stealing across some great plain which they have striven hard to traverse. Perhaps it is well that the world should have such men. When great industries arise in places reclaimed from the desert, and high stacks belch forth their smoke over the lands where the prospector toiled in his

COLONEL CARDEN'S BAROTSE POLICE BOYS, BROKEN HILL

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ONE OF THE MINERALIZED KOPJES AT
BROKEN HILL, RHODESIA

solitude, the name of the man who washed " pay dirt " in that one-time region of desolation on which a great city has reared up its stone temples, will be remembered by few. The citizens who feed themselves with golden spoons and clothe themselves in gorgeous raiment, where the pioneer cooked a guinea-fowl over a camp-fire or made himself a shirt out of the remnants of a torn tent, will have forgotten the name of the first man in that land. One can almost imagine the restless spirit rising in a shallow-dug grave, one can almost hear the dream talk of the poor unhonoured prospector in those splendid words of Kipling—

" Well I know who'll take the credit—
All the clever chaps that followed—
Came, a dozen men together—
Never knew my desert fears,
Tracked me by the camps I'd quitted,
Used the waterholes I'd hollowed;
They'll go back and do the talking;
They'll be called the pioneers ! "

CHAPTER III

MASHONALAND: FROM SALISBURY TO THE PORTUGUESE FRONTIER

THERE are no records of Job having journeyed with pack-donkeys. Had he done so his reputation for amazing patience would assuredly have suffered.

When L. and I travelled from Salisbury to Tete, with Molo, Dodo and Clo Clo, we ran up a big account in that celestial ledger wherein swear-words and curses are entered. We shall be tempted to dispute those accounts in the eventful day, when they are presented for settlement. They should have been charged to Molo, Dodo and Clo Clo. It should here be explained that we were not eloping with the female section of a theatrical company. Molo, Dodo and Clo Clo were three donkey mares, for which we paid £7 10*s*. apiece. We were bound for the far-distant interior after elephants and adventures, and as we could not get porters we purchased the three donkeys.

We wandered off the beaten track, tramped and struggled along paths which were practically untrodden by white feet, toiled over mountains, and forded angry rivers. It was hard work from daylight to sundown, and we had but very little shooting. L., however, proved himself a magnificent companion, and when at last we reached that old-world town slumbering by the Zambesi,

which is named Tete, we looked back over the noble Luenya, the tumbling Mazoe and the distant hills of Molimbwe with genuine sighs of regret.

One glorious morning in June of 1909 everything was at last ready for a start. We had arrived in Salisbury with two Portuguese "boys," two pointers, a greyhound, rifles, ammunition, ropes, a small tent, boxes of provisions, blankets, and sundry other impedimenta. At first we were mistaken for a circus—not altogether an unreasonable assumption.

On that morning when we commenced packing, a small crowd assembled in one of the side streets off Manica Road to witness our departure. They were rewarded by seeing Molo bolt with her pack, which had been tied on to the wooden slats of her saddle by an amazing number of ropes and knots and straps and girths. Her fastenings would well-nigh have broken the heart of Prometheus, but, despite them all, she dashed off into the street. My valued Westley-Richards 12-bore, in its new case, slipped down between her legs. A load of provisions twisted around, and a roll of blankets draped her in terror. She turned a complete somersault, and I felt sure she had broken her neck. A group of small boys laughed. We rescued Molo from the treasured debris and tried again. Dodo next endeavoured to end her asinine life by doing likewise with her loads, and then Clo Clo, despite such persuasive things as sjamboks and ropes, refused to budge. Truly our peregrinations were starting under an unpromising augury! Eventually we persuaded the three animals to move slowly along. Tom and Sam, the two natives, also carried loads, and as we were short-handed, L.

and I had to shoulder rifles and drive the donkeys. Clo Clo proceeded at the rate of about a mile an hour, and that night we had to pitch camp at Hope's Farm—only about five miles from Salisbury. The next day I returned to town, exchanged Clo Clo for Clo Clo II, bought a few necessary odds and ends and a bottle of "dop," and at length, after scouring Salisbury, secured a smart little Angoni named Julius, who said he was prepared to share our lot at 10*s*. per month.

The next morning we started from Hope's Farm, having destroyed the wooden pack-saddles and used them for firewood. They were most useless things, and for the rest of the long journey we resorted to balancing the loads, a matter of very considerable difficulty. We generally commenced to pack as soon as it was light, and it always took at least half-an-hour to make the loads "sit" properly. Often and often one donkey would barge into another before we had gone a couple of hundred yards. Over would come the pack, and we would gaze in dismay at a bundle of cartridges, cooking-pots, and precious tins of meat rolling down a deep ravine or bouncing along to a river. It was indeed heart-breaking.

The morning we left Hope's Farm we had a slight adventure with a mamba. Taffy, Ginger and Tinker, in their madness, rushed in on the deadly reptile, but I managed to blow his head off with a charge of shot before any damage was done to the dogs. Early in the afternoon we stood on the southern ridge of the Chisawasha Valley, and gazed across to where the purple hills of Abercorn stood as sentinels in the azure dome of the sky. Below us the red-brick buildings of the Mission Station, surrounded by

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ONE OF OUR DONKEYS CROSSING THE INYAGUI RIVER

fruitful green gardens, told of an outpost of God. To Chisawasha many a foot-sore wanderer has come, and the good Fathers have laid him on a restful bed. They have given the thirsty drink, the hungry food, and the sick medicine. There they mould the native mind. They build wagons and houses and cultivate orchards and crops, and if you have any knowledge of the Bantu you will applaud their doctrine. For the dignity of Labour is a far better thing to teach the children of Africa than the dignity of Christ.

At dusk we camped by a little laughing rivulet, and tethered the donkeys up in a deserted kraal. The majesty of the dying sun threw shafts of gold and fire across the western sky, and as we ate our frugal meal a great peace and contentment came over us—the peace of the untrammelled byways where the noise and bustle of the throng are not, where the lullaby of the river laughs one to sleep, and the glory of the dawn is the waking harbinger of that freedom which only the waste spaces of this onward world can know. We marched through m'hoba-hoba trees, and penetrated what is now the Arcturus district, and an important mining centre. But at that time there was only a meagre amount of prospecting going on in the region, and it was wild, little-traversed country. I shot a partridge for the pot, and at night we outspanned at the M'Fen River, a pretty stream which, in common with the other rivers of this neighbourhood, flows north to meet the Mazoe, which, in turn, joins the Luenya* and empties into the Zambesi a few miles below sleepy, slumbering Tete. The next river we forded was the Inyagui, where there is a picturesque little Mashona kraal,

* Or "Ruenya."

and the usual howling mob of venomous pariah dogs—yellow mongrels with ears pricked like jackals. L. had a hard struggle to march that day, as he had a touch of fever, but eventually we forded the Inyagui and camped on the other side. There are golden grains of hard-learned wisdom in those last four words. "To camp on the other side" is, in fact, one of the first and most important things to learn in the alphabet of African travel. Nature works with fevered pulses in this continent, and once the Rubicon has been crossed one can afford to smile at the torrents of the night's storm. There was, I remember, a rather curious contrivance in use at the Inyagui to enable travellers to wend their troubled ways when the river was in flood. Two staunch trees, one on either bank, were connected by a wire rope. From this was swung a "cage" composed of timber and reeds, which was hauled from side to side as required by natives. It was rather a grotesque and unreliable sort of ferry, yet it served its purpose in a crude and terrifying way.

We were now well within the true borders of the Mashona country. Kraals galore we passed through, all teeming with life—men, women—round-bellied "umfaans," mongrel dogs, noisy goats, fleas and other insects of prey, all enveloped in a memorable matrix of filth and smell. The most ardent admirer of the great "M'Shona" or "M'Swina" race could scarcely accuse them of being cleanly. They put stones in tree-forks at dusk to appease evil spirits. They recognize in some vague and nebulous way a Deity. By a considerable stretch of the imagination they might perhaps be termed "Godly," but not all the powers of fiction in this world could suggest

that the M'Swina are cleanly. In many ways true native Mashonaland has much of topsy-turveydom about it. A flowing stream, for instance, is in most parts of Africa, and, for that matter, of the world, deemed in some way an emblem of purity. At any rate one would imbibe of the running water rather than of the stagnant. But in native Mashonaland the wise take their fill from pools and little backwashes. It is a custom among the M'Swina to bury their dead in or by running water, and they pollute the flowing, tumbling rivers with which so much of their country is beautifully and bountifully endowed in various other ways. Wherefore, should you ever wander among the M'Swina, beware of the brooklet. Look for an evil-smelling morass or a puddle, remnant of last season's rains.

Nowadays I never set eyes on an egg unless my mind wanders back to that memorable journey from Salisbury into the interior. We had eggs for breakfast, for lunch, and for dinner; eggs boiled, eggs fried, eggs cooked in some wonderful manner, known only to Julius, and eggs omeletted. On one occasion on our journey to Tete we devoured no less than thirty-two eggs between us for dinner, and we felt that we could never look a self-respecting sort of hen in the face again!

The day we left the Inyagui L. had that curse of Africa, malaria, rather badly, and he had to struggle along and look with longing eyes for the next camp. At the Tshanoia River we halted during the heat of the day. L. "took it easy," whilst I wandered off to the native village, and surveyed the M'Swina in all their domestic happiness.

At the back of the kraal a great tortoise-

shaped rock, seared and furrowed by the rains of countless centuries, towered up. All over this part of Mashonaland huge granite masses, enormous as half the abbeys and cathedrals of England built into one, are scattered like colossal marbles, that the gods had tired of and hurled in their weariness away from them. Some were ill-shaped and resembled nothing save "tors," or "cairns," others took on vague likenesses to churches and lighthouses. All, according to native superstition, were the abode of evil spirits, gnomes of wicked impulse, and earth-bound ancestors. But despite such gruesome reputations the M'Swina huddled around these rock masses in thousands. In the forests surrounding their bases they found weird shells which were worn round the necks of the youngsters as love charms, and were greatly treasured. The soil round the bases of these granite giants was good and kindly, and so the natives tilled their crops and lived that life of happy idleness which is their heritage.

On the road we met scores of blacks bound for the mines, escorted by tall, athletic-looking "boys" who bore the letters R.N.L.B. (Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau) on their blue jerseys. Once we met a bronzed native labour recruiter and his wife returning to civilization after a sojourn in the wilds in the interests of the golden holes of the South.

This human driving power that whirls the wheels of the great industries was drafted from the various corners of South Central Africa—from "M'Pezeni" (Fort Jameson), from N'Ungwe (which is the native name for Tete), from the hot, sweltering banks of the Zambesi, and from the cool highlands of Angonia. They were marching

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A TYPICAL MASHONA FAMILY; TSHANOIA RIVER

to " Harari " (Salisbury), and as they passed our little caravan they shouted a cheery salute to the loquacious Julius or the more solemn faces of Tom and Sam. Stream after stream we crossed —all hurrying to join the great Mazoe—and then at last one dull and clouded afternoon we reached M'Rewas, a small native Commissioner's and police post, about sixty miles from Salisbury.

We passed a little, open cemetery, and as we took our broad-brimmed hats off, we read the names of men who had helped to mould Eastern Rhodesia, and had left their bones in the country's keeping. We halted for a few minutes at the B.S.A.P.* post, and admired one of the finest koodoo heads I have ever set eyes on. Its stately owner had been pulled down by a lion. Half a mile beyond the police post we pitched camp. L., who had pluckily plodded along in the grip of the malarial fiend for the two previous days, took to his blankets, and I wandered away to the local store to purchase a few supplies. High up on a kopje I found the merchant of M'Rewas, clad in flannels and a public-school blazer. He gave me tea, and after we had talked of lions and leopards, I bought a few tins of meat, fish and milk. The gentleman storekeeper offered to show me a short cut to camp, saying that he wished to pay a call *en route*. I followed him, and presently on the side of the kopje we came to a thorn " scherm," or fence. Inside there was a man unshaven and unshorn sitting on a soap-box in the centre of his barricade.

Not until some time after did I find out a little of his history, and ascertain the whys and wherefores of his lonely entrenchment. He was a well-known man on the Rand a few years back,

* British South Africa Police.

and until he died, a few months ago, was quite a character in Rhodesia. I learned in Tete of an English senhor who had "taken over" the local hotel for a week and made the Aveneida de Freria d'Andrade run red in *vino tinto* and yellow in the baser spirits. Only after he left did the proprietor find out that the merry fellow was not a millionaire after all! The law compelled him to lie low for a while, and the M'Rewas Kopje was his sanctuary. M'Rewas is fairly high, and that night we were glad to pile all our available blankets on our beds. Poor L. shivered and chattered through the night, and our little band of retainers huddled around a big fire. The three donkeys, Molo, Dodo and Clo Clo, were tethered up close to the tent, as there were lions prowling around, and we could not afford to take risks with our transport. The next day, Sunday, we "slacked it" in camp, cleaned guns, and got ready for the journey to M'Tokos—forty miles distant. It is curious how thoroughly one realizes the excellence of the Fourth Commandment when away in the wilds, far from all such civilized things as church bells, calendars and daily papers. Many and many a time when off the beaten track, not knowing the day of the week or the day of the month, scarcely, indeed, knowing the month, has a longing for a day's rest come over me. The most exciting native tales of elephants with tusks as long as crocodiles close to camp have not drawn me from my blankets. Later on I have calculated and consulted at length my diary. Invariably Sunday! Man has grown to feel the need of the seventh day, and whether he is in Kensington or the Congo he hears the slothful voice of the Sabbath telling him to rest. During the dark

days of the French Revolution every tenth day was appointed a day of rest and amusement; but neither man nor beast could stand the strain of ten days' work. The failure of this experiment was noteworthy proof of the comparative littleness of man's wisdom. But I digress. Monday found L. much better, so we said "good-bye" to M'Rewas and struck off towards the north-east.

It is not advisable to lose one's temper on a donkey. It is far less advisable to hit one of these provoking animals with a valuable gun. The morning we left M'Rewas, Clo Clo maddened me into a sort of Balaam-like wrath by absolutely refusing to keep up with her consorts. I gave her an angry prod with the heel of my Westley-Richards hammerless 12-bore. The stock broke. I choked with curses, and Clo Clo turned around and smiled on me sweetly.

We had another catastrophe that morning. One of the animals played the giddy goat whilst fording a small stream, and her loads fell into the water. This greatly amused a B.S.A. policeman, who was escorting the Chief Native Commissioner on a tour of inspection. L. and I failed to see the humour of the situation.

On the morrow we reached the Inyaderi River at midday after a long and tiring trek. The Inyaderi is a pretty stream, and one of the largest of the many tributaries of the Mazoe. On its banks we found some "Government rest-houses," in reality grass and reed-built huts. Here we pitched camp, and went out shooting in the afternoon. There was a fair amount of buck spoor around, but a solitary hare constituted the bag.

The loads sat well the next day, and we made

fair progress. In the afternoon we reached an eminence—a Lilliputian plateau, in fact—and a wonderful view stretched out before us. It was truly magnificent. Away to the north the hills of Mount Darwin cut the horizon like the teeth of an immense saw. Between us and them lay the country of the M'Bushla, a tribe of murderous thieves and liars. Southwards, hill after hill, valley after valley rolled away through the beautiful Inyanga country to Umtali and the Portuguese frontier. Behind us lay the giant kopje at M'Rewas. Ahead the granite mass of M'Tokos, which, according to native superstition, was hurled from Umtali, loomed up immense and impressive.

We slept that night in an "umsasa" or "scherm," and the next morning marched into M'Tokos. Molo, the best of the three donkeys, had a sore back, and we had to distribute her load between Clo Clo and the three natives and ourselves, so that it was a weary little caravan that eventually came to a halt in front of Massey's store.

M'Tokos is a British South African Police Post situated in the heart of a great, granite-boulder-strewn country. It is high, wild land in the centre of that stretch of Eastern Mashonaland, peopled by the M'Tokos, a minor tribe or off-shoot of the great M'Swina race. The M'Tokos took no part in the Rebellion, and, as some sort of a reward, certain of their chiefs are entitled to carry fire-arms. At Massey's store we met B., who at one time held an important official position in the Transvaal Government service. B. died, poor fellow, in the Rhodesian byways a few months ago. He was of one of the most noble and famous families of England, and he

was wholly out of his element selling tins of bully beef behind the counters of a trading station. Here, too, we met a sallow-faced white man who had come down from the far interior, and a rather unprepossessing-looking "prospector." The traveller had been very ill, and had little to say for himself, but the prospector gentleman kept up a running fire of babble. Said he to B., "'Ullo, old stiff! I'm sure I've met you before. Down in the south, I reckon." Said B. in his quiet way, "Highly probable. I was once Governor of the Pretoria gaol." The digger lapsed into a pleasing silence after that.

As Molo, the leading donkey, was unfit for duty, we visited the Native Commissioner's office and prayed him to secure us four porters. We lunched with B., and, to our great delight, four stalwart M'Tokos arrived early in the afternoon. Their leader and spokesman was a regular old Uncle-Tom-looking sort of native, not without certain markedly simian characteristics about his features and limbs. He was a cheerful, willing old savage, full of anecdote and jest. L. and I named him the "Bo'sun," and we said "good-bye" to him with keen regret a week or two later. These M'Tokos agreed to carry loads for us to the Portuguese border, so in the afternoon we set off—L. and I, seven natives, and three donkeys. Great, precipitous granite cliffs towered high all round us, and at night we camped in a native village, where a number of Portuguese boys, going through to Salisbury, were resting. The "Bo'sun" very cleverly bound up the stock of my broken shot-gun with wire, and the next morning I shot a brace of guinea-fowl in some old native gardens. Julius, the resourceful, cooked them in admirable style.

That afternoon we passed through particularly wild country. Enormous rock masses frowned down on us. Here and there we had dense thorn and bush belts to penetrate, and we noticed baobab trees—immense vegetable monsters which seem to favour unkindly soil—growing in fair profusion.

My diary records that on the night of June 18, Tom and Sam bolted. These two boys we had brought all the way from Gatooma, and L. and I heaped many curses on their heads. Julius, the little Angoni I had recruited in Salisbury, remained faithful to us, and he, indeed, went right up to Lake Bangweolo, and proved himself a most admirable "boy." The situation, however, was critical. Molo's back was so sore she scarcely could be touched. The four recently engaged M'Tokos were affected by the disappearance of the two scoundrels, and wanted to return. We were in a wild and uninhabited part of the country, so the outlook was far from promising. But at last our counsels and the logic of the "Bo'sun" prevailed. We redistributed loads all round, and the heavily-loaded little caravan moved onwards. The four M'Toko boys, after a good deal of discussion, agreed to come on with us to Tete, and, as if to cheer them forward, we ascended some great diorite hills, from the top of which we could see, stretching away on the horizon, all purple and indistinct in the distance, the Molimbwe Mountains on the Portuguese frontier. It was a magnificent view that our eyes gazed on. In the foreground was the great rugged hill of Masoka, and below us lay crag after crag, jagged masses of granite, bush and mountain rill.

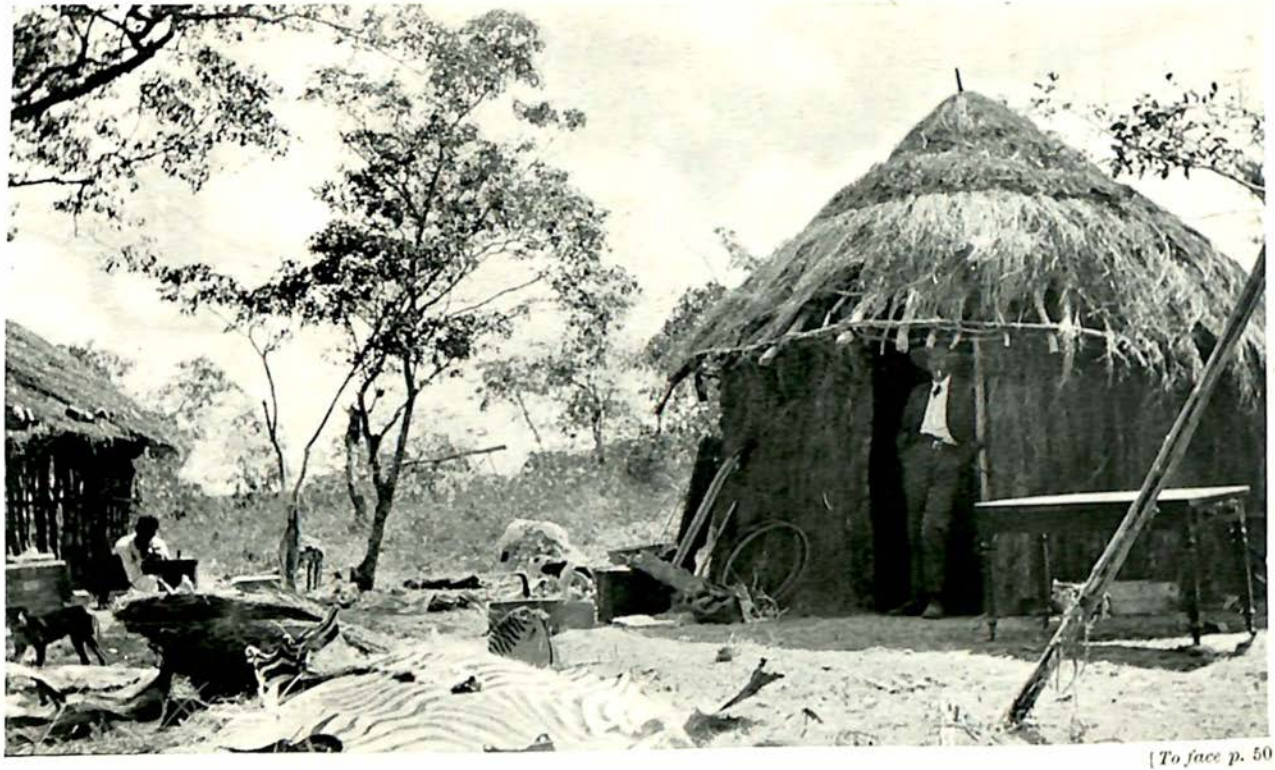
The "Bo'sun" told us that down there, some-

where amidst this wild jumble of Nature's, we should find a village, and that our only way to the border lay past it. So we began to descend, and a terrible descent it was, too. Before long loads began to roll off, and the donkeys were sliding and tumbling down the sides of giant rocks as steep as the sides of houses. In places the animals had literally to be dragged down, and we had to carry the loads ourselves. It was a long and tiring task, but at length we espied a cluster of huts far away down below us. Late in the afternoon we reached this kraal, known as Chafiga's, and certainly one of the most picturesque native villages I have ever set eyes on. To the north-west the great wall of granite that we had clambered down soared upwards with crests all castellated and forbidding. At the foot of the wall a little stream coursed past trees all gold and brown with the glory of their winter garments. And then came the clearing in which the people of Chafiga's lived their life of lazy luxury. They had crops and grass roofs, and good water in abundance, and what more does the African native desire? Yet it is for these happy children of savagery that they rave for funds in the pulpits of England, what time the Thames Embankment and the East End are crying out for bread and a stitch of clothing!

We pitched camp on beyond the village. A woman was crying for her dead child on the threshold of a hut, and far into the night her wails made pitiful music. My night's slumbers were further disturbed by one of the donkeys nibbling at my blankets in the darkness. An owl, too, hooted mournfully from the kopjes behind our little tent. The "Bo'sun" gravely informed me that it was an "m'zeze," or evil

spirit, and that the kopjes all around were haunted by ghosts and wraiths. The "Bo'sun" also informed us that we were getting into country where water was very scarce, and that we should all be very thirsty before the next nightfall.

The old man was quite right. Up to Chafiga's we had little or no trouble with water; indeed, we often remarked on the generous manner in which Nature had endowed Eastern Mashonaland with rivers. But the day after we left that picturesque village water troubles began. At first we had some more stiff climbing through rugged gorges to do. Here baboons sat on the gaunt rocks and gruffly barked at us as we passed. We met some native monkey-catchers with big nets. They informed us that "n'yama-zaan" (wild game) was scarce, and that they were out on a food-hunting expedition. In East Africa I had met a N'Dorobo who professed to be fond of lion meat, but I had never before heard of natives eating monkeys! This fact is interesting, as showing how low the African native will prostrate himself before the shrine of meat. Shortly after meeting the baboon-hunters a heated argument arose among our natives as to the route we should take. The M'Tokos protested that if we went the path Julius advocated we should die of thirst. Julius replied that the road advised by the M'Tokos meant parched throats and a terrible and lingering death; a truly pleasing prospect altogether! Whose counsels prevailed I know not, but at length some route or other was agreed on, and L. and I marched on, it must be confessed, not without a considerable amount of anxiety. We reached a small village at mid-day, and the



[*To face p. 50*

PROSPECTOR'S CAMP; MASHONALAND

inhabitants fled in terror. Why, I know not. Africa is full of fears and tremblings and foes and marauders, and these people no doubt thought we had come on a raiding expedition.

In the afternoon we marched over some likely-looking quartz outcrops, and as night began to fall we reached the dried-up bed of the Wezi. We were all fearfully thirsty, but there was not a drop of water in sight. My heart sank within me, but presently one of the M'Tokos dug a deep pit in the bed of that disappointing stream, and a little black evil-smelling liquid welled up. It was all we had, but that indeed tasted as nectar. The next day I shot a brace of guinea-fowl, and in the evening we reached a pretty kraal near the Mudzi, a river which in the rains is a fast-flowing stream, but at the time of our crossing it was well-nigh dried up. Foot-sore and weary, we turned in, and the next morning set off to reach the Portuguese frontier. About mid-day we crossed a big open clearing in the bush. Away to our left a big boundary commission pole stood up like a dead tree, and we knew that we were at last out of British territory and had entered Portuguese East Africa.

CHAPTER IV

PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA: TO THE CITY OF SIESTAS AND BEYOND

As though to let us know that we had at last passed through Chartered territory, the whole country seemed to take on a different aspect. The vegetation became more luxuriant, buck and birds were more plentiful, and instead of the arid bush and dried-up streams of extreme Eastern Mashonaland we got glimpses of rivulets rushing through a wealth of verdure. Even the natives seemed to have changed. They were more hospitable, more interested and more interesting. Instead of a stubborn diffidence, they put on faces of welcome and saluted with prettily pronounced "senhors." It was indeed as though, when we crossed that line of bush clearing denoting the frontier, we had stepped into a new world peopled with pleasantly different tribes, and with Mother Earth robed in a new and far more beautiful garment.

The first Portuguese East African kraal we camped at was Chipanes, and here close to the village we discovered some magnificent mahogany bean trees. They are pretty little things, these red and black vegetable curios, and we gathered some handfuls of them. At the next village we purchased a few curiously shaped battle-axes and knives from the natives after a great deal of bartering. We were also pressed to buy a

captive owl, but as we had no earthly use for the uncanny bird, we refrained from parting with further supplies of "limbo" or calico. The African native is at heart a great bargain driver, and it was amusing to watch the people at the villages feel and inspect the calico, measure the stretches of cloth we offered, and then look with careful and comparing eyes at the knives or spears or axes they wished to dispose of. The same process of lengthy consideration, accompanied by a great deal of haggling, always took place over eggs and mealie meal, which we had to purchase for our own natives. Sometimes money was asked for instead of calico, and if a sixpence was tendered, the village would gather round and stare at and handle the coin until satisfied as to its genuineness before the bargain was struck. Invariably before commerce commenced, generosity was allowed a brief prelude. A small basket of meal or an egg the size of a ping-pong ball would be given to us. Of course something was expected in return, and many a handful of salt or pinch of tobacco we returned for these customs. One afternoon, when on the way to Kapsyiro's kraal, we had a very hard and trying climb. At the top of the hill the rise was crested by huge rocks, and how the donkeys ever managed to scale them was, now that I come to look back on the incident, a veritable miracle. There were also, I remember, some singularly ferocious thorns growing hereabouts. They were truly devilish things, with a kind of thorn growing within a thorn, and they gripped clothes and flesh like a fish-hook. At one of these villages we met a singularly entertaining individual in the person of an Indian "Babu," who was trekking to Salisbury. What

he was, whether scribe or chef or bottle-washer, I know not, but he had a most remarkable fund of tales and experiences to draw on, and knew Africa from the Nile to the Zambesi. He told us many interesting tales of elephant hunting and ivory trading, and he was particularly informative on the subject of illicit "elephants' teeth," and the ways and means of transporting them from Africa to Asia.

At length one morning we reached Shangara, on the banks of the Ruenya, the largest river that we had as yet seen. Bush fires had been burning all over the country-side, and at times we had literally to pull the donkeys through the edges of the belts of flame. The air had been hot and oppressive, and so it was with a feeling of relief and joy that we at last sighted the noble waterway of the Ruenya, which, in the rains, is a strong surging torrent four hundred yards from bank to bank. But when we reached Shangara it was in the dry season, and the waters were divided by a broad spit of clean white sand. Forests of reeds and rushes garbed the banks, and altogether the scene was one of refreshing beauty, such a thing as our eyes had not gazed on for many a weary day. Shangara once boasted of a fort and a commandant, but the natives destroyed the stronghold, and militant Portugal is now to be found at Musanga, on the Rhodesian border, at no great distance from the Kaiser Wilhelm goldfield. But the wooden skeleton of the old citadel still looks across the river with a mock defiance. Here we made our camp. One or two Banyan traders had established themselves at Shangara, and we managed to purchase a little sugar and tea from them. They did a brisk trade with the natives of this

densely populated district in bees'-wax and meal or "oofoo." The Ruenya contains a certain amount of alluvial gold, and this is collected by the natives and sold to the Banyans in quills. There can be no doubt that many of the natives of this district pay their hut tax out of gold which they wash out of the beds of the Ruenya and Mazoe rivers. One of the Banyan store-keepers told us that buck "as big as oxes" were plentiful along the river banks, and so we went out shooting in the afternoon. But the bush was frightfully dense and thick, and we had to return to camp and make a dinner of eggs. It was full moon that night, and as the music of the night winds came rushing up the river I stood on the edge of the old parapet. Below me the river was bathed in splendour, and the moon-rays on the alternating stretches of snow-white sand and water made up a scene of exquisite beauty. We had been tramping hard since we left Salisbury, and on the Ruenya, or, as it is called by the natives, the "Luenya," we felt like jaded town children at the seaside. There were no crocodiles to be seen, and the boys assured us that these loathsome creatures were very scarce in this river. So we swam and bathed, and left much of the grime and dust that we had collected on our journey from M'Tokos in the noble stream. It seemed like desecration, but it had to be done.

One lovely morning the little caravan, which had been strengthened by one or two voluntary recruits who were trekking to Tete and desired to travel with us, moved across the alternating stretches of sand and water. In four or five days we should see the Zambesi. The glory of the soft bright air and the beauty of the scene

made us feel singularly light-hearted, and as the water splashed the donkey's legs L. sang—

> Oh, there's lots of gold,
> So I've been told,
> On the banks of the Ruenya !

These banks were festooned with lianas, monkey ropes and trailing creepers. Beneath our feet there was dense green undergrowth, and overhead the foliage of giant trees often met and shut out the brilliant azure of the sky. Along the river grew bushes, covered with "macao" berries—a species of wild fruit about the size of a gooseberry and possessing a peculiarly seductive taste. Here and there were rifts in the luxury of the vegetation, and then the eye caught glimpses of the river flowing quietly away to Massangano and the mother stream that churns up mud and sand on the edge of the Indian Ocean. The still, placid waters basked in the sunshine. Birds of plumage most glorious flitted like bats in the semi-darkness of the tropic avenues or burst through the open belts, their feathers blazing like burnished gold or polished purple.

There were guinea-fowl here in great numbers. At dusk they came running down the sandy stretches of the river in armies. All day long we could hear their curious, cackling, buzzing noise, as they either picked up seeds and grain around old native gardens or perched themselves on tree-tops and surveyed the landscape. We depended largely on guinea-fowl for the "pot." Sometimes we flushed them in our march and sometimes we shot them from tree-tops. It sounds very unsporting, but when you are trekking up into the interior of Africa after

elephant, and belts have to be drawn in tight on a ravenous appetite, one doesn't worry about shooting "sitters." And, as a matter of fact, picking guinea-fowl off their perches on top of the enormously high trees of the Ruenya is far from being easy work. One has to crawl through vegetation, tangled and gnarled and knotted, and manœuvre amidst creepers and branches to get a shot at the wily fowl outlined against a little patch of blue, high, high up, so high that only a good choke barrel and a charge of number five shot, well directed, will bring him down.

Often when returning from these guinea-fowling expeditions it was late evening, and the rest of the caravan, now largely enforced by a number of local natives, had passed on.

Then it was I learned much of African wisdom. An African native is never at a loss to follow up a caravan to which he belongs. He may be miles behind, but even in the densest bush he will find his way to the camp-fires of his companions.

At one time I used to marvel greatly at this, but now I know the methods of direction, the explanation seems extraordinarily simple. Where there are several paths crossing one another, sticks are placed across the wrong tracks or a line is drawn across them in the ground, thus denoting that these byways are "closed," or are not being travelled over. Where natives leave a main bush thoroughfare and turn off to reach a hidden village, green leaves are thrown on the paths taken. In dense forest, trees are blazed along the line of march. There are many other silent methods of information employed. Thus, a mealie cob tied up on a bush outside a village means that the inhabitants have plenty of grain, and are prepared to barter for food.

One lovely warm morning—it was again a Sunday—we decided that as we had been making excellent progress, we would give ourselves a treat, and have a real slack holiday. So we put up our little tent, bathed in the noble river, ate macao berries, turned the donkeys loose, and gloried in the knowledge that there was no distant camp to make for at nightfall.

That afternoon there came to our camp a type of person who is very rare in poor, poverty-stricken, heathen Africa—a native beggar. In fact, this was the only one I have ever seen in the untrammelled ways of the Dark Continent. He was attended by a woman, and was quite blind. As if to compensate him for the loss of his eyesight, Nature had endowed him with extraordinarily powerful lungs, and he bawled and sang and bellowed in a truly indescribable manner. He had, furthermore, a sort of reed instrument that made a noise more like a flute than a penny whistle, and more like bagpipes than either. Evidently he expected us to appreciate his music, for after he had made the most horrible din imaginable, he was led to us and begged for money. We were much annoyed at this disturbance of the peace and quiet of that lovely, lazy day, and refused to give him anything in consequence. He thereupon retired a few yards and recommenced his symphonies of discord. Then again he set up a plaintive, mournful squeal for alms, and in anger we at last bade him "get out of it." The blind beggar and his woman crept away, but, no doubt as a kind of vengeance, he kept up his horrible din for long afterwards, and L. and I were sincerely glad when he went away to his village chattering and jabbering like an outraged ape.

Next day we lunched beneath the shade of a large tree which is known to all the natives on the Ruenya as N'Tondo Nyam Pondo (the place where the pound was lost). It is so named because some years ago a white man lost a pound whilst camped beneath it.

With a view to its recovery he got natives from all the surrounding villages to hunt for the lost sovereign. One pound, or 4,500 reis, means a great deal to a Portuguese East African "boy," and that search will be for long remembered. The memory of the thing is immortalized in the name of the tree.

At dusk the caravan reached Chambrugas, foot-sore and weary. Some little distance from Chambrugas the Mazoe and the Ruenya join, and a broad, yet very placid sheet flows Zambesi-wards to the east.

Chambrugas is indeed one of the most beautiful spots I have ever seen. The river, so broad, so still, rests in a setting of emerald verdure, and the whole scene is strangely reminiscent of those lovely lakes of Killarney which are the jewels of Erin.

We crossed the Ruenya at dawn on the backs of the donkeys, and at night slept in a dried-up river-bed.

The traffic on the road told us that at last we were nearing Tete, and next mid-day, from the hills of Kaliwera, we saw below us the white buildings of the quaint old-world town of "N'Ungwe," as it is named by the natives.

The Zambesi, dancing with sun spangles, swept past it, and in the afternoon we marched down the Aveneida de Freria d'Andrade, a foot-worn, weary cavalcade.

Tete is no new East African town like Fort

Jameson or Blantyre or Nairobi, a result of modern settlement consequent on the scramble for territory in which the Powers indulged in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It is rather to be classed with Mozambique or Mombasa, for the Portuguese have held sway in the Zambesi Valley for centuries. True, the majority of its buildings are modern, but there is a background of antiquity to the place, which harmonizes with the mighty river flowing quietly by it.

More than four hundred years ago a little band of venturesome Portuguese navigators raised the standard of their nation to the glory of Christ and their temporal monarch at this spot on the Zambesi, some 320 miles from the mouth of that mighty waterway. Those were the days when Portugal and Spain were the greatest colonizing powers in all Christendom, when the proud spirits of men like Francisco Barreto and Vasco Fernandes Homem fought the good fight against heathen Africa under conditions so awful, so difficult, that no living man can conceive what those daring voyagers underwent. Their deeds left an impress deep in the sands of history. Mombasa, Mozambique, Quilimane, and many another stronghold of the East Coast fell before their matchlocks and cannon, and their expeditions penetrated deep into the heart of Africa.

Here and there they founded administrative posts and forts, and one of these was Tete.

Slumbering old town! Gone are the glamour and the glory of your heroic past; gone are those deeds of daring which won for your nation Eastern Africa! Conquest has given way to commerce, you have given yourself up to a seemingly eternal siesta, and your might has

fallen from you! Perhaps Tete is entitled to plead some sort of an excuse, for there is an atmosphere of *dolce far niente* about all Zambesia, which seems to envelop its people, its scenes, its very trees and birds, in a siesta shroud.

Even the great river, after rushing in a mad, seething torrent over the rapids of Caroabassa, wends slowly, sleepily, seaward past Tete, unless it be that the Zambesi is in full flood and the pent-up waters in the north tear along to the Indian Ocean. And when the mother river hastens past the picturesque little settlement, Tete looks disdainfully at its energy, for surely the year is long; might not that bit of driftwood stay its scurry until to-morrow?

"Yesterday and to-morrow"; those are the keynotes of this capital of Zambesia.

Yesterday Portugal subdued East Africa; and to-morrow? Ah, well, *quien sabe?* The sun is high in the heavens and there are thousands of natives who can work!

So thinks the Portuguese official or merchant as he lounges lazily back in his "machilla" (hammock), gaudily decked with leopard-skins and a tasselled awning whereon perhaps his coat-of-arms is emblazoned.

Down the Aveneida de Freria d'Andrade swing the "machilla" boys, past the old, low-lying, blue-stained houses which seem to struggle for existence with the more solid, lofty, cool, white buildings which Tete in a moment of wondrous activity reared up unto itself along the river front.

The lord and master of the "machilla" indolently alights and saunters into his house, a figure celestial almost in the snowy whiteness of his "ducks" and helmet, perhaps to enjoy a cigarette and a slumber.

Tete is a town of half-castes. In every office, administrative and commercial, woolly heads and dark, olive faces peer at or interrogate you.

But what does that matter? Tete has a prosperity peculiarly its own, a slumbering, seductive comfort such as you will only find where the palm tree grows and the wind is warm with the breath of the tropics.

Providence seems to guard the place and guide its laboured, lazy footsteps as carefully and miraculously as the steps of a drunken man are guided. There are no sanitary laws in Tete, yet the town boasts a bill of health which many cities in South Africa might envy. Around Tete large numbers of fat, flourishing cattle may be observed, yet there is nothing for them to eat—at least, the eye fails to detect any pasturage. The place may well be congratulated on its good fortune; but I have always noticed that good luck comes more readily to the easy-going and irresponsible than to the striving and strenuous.

The good people of Tete would no doubt be wroth were any taint of irresponsibility to be laid at their doors, for have they not a navy to defend them, an army to uphold their traditions of glorious memory, a fort to bid defiance to all foes? In short, have they not all the responsibilities of a military nation to respect, and have they not the means of enforcing that respect?

Of forts there are two, the river fortress commanding the Zambesi and the old land fort at the back of the town. Of the latter it is related that a young British naval officer, in order to win a bet, stormed the battlements single-handed one night, gagged the sentry, spiked the guns, locked up officers and men, and pitched

the ammunition into the bush. He thereupon burst in on his companions at Correa's Hotel and exclaimed with pride, "Gentlemen, I have taken Tete!"

How old Barreto's spirit must have raved if indeed he stood sentinel that night on Kaliwera Hill!

How are the mighty fallen! The effeminate lords of commerce have captured the glorious life of conquest and battle. Instead of the thunder of the cannon, the placid purr of the stern-wheelers breaks the solemn silence of the Zambesi.

Machinery for the gold-mines of Chifumbaze is brought up the great waterway instead of conquerors. Ground-nuts and bees'-wax wend their way seawards instead of slaves and savage treasure.

Thus may one's thoughts turn when the silvery moon casts a sheen of splendour over the Zambesi and lights up the spume from the s.s. *Sofala's* stern wheels till it scintillates like a dancing wave of diamonds on the bosom of the water.

The snow-white church of the Sacred Heart stands out from the river banks spectre-like in the moonlight, and on the quay a throng of officers, civilians and natives, all arrayed in white, wave lanterns to the incoming steamer.

After all she is only coming up-river for a cargo of monkey nuts. How unromantic it seems! Monkey nuts, indeed! And when you fall asleep that night you dream that the decks of the *Sofala* are crowded with slaves and that her hold is full of ivory and gold-dust.

On July 14 we crossed the Zambesi, and as the white walls and vari-tinted roofs clustering

along the river-bank faded into the dim distance, we set our faces to the north with many regrets and lingering memories of their lazy hospitality. The boat-songs of our native servants, as they pulled and punted, fell soft and musical on the tropic air.

We reached the north bank near Senhor Bevar's, where a large number of boys were gathered, all laden with graphite, which they had carried down from Angonia. Right along the great North Road from Tete to Fort Jameson signs of commerce and industry are curiously intermingled with barbarism and savagery. The road is broad and well preserved. Portuguese administration has spent thousands of pounds on its construction and upkeep; for the Portuguese are as insistent about good roads in their African territory as the Romans were in early Britain. There is, too, a narrow pathway running from the Zambesi to the frontier. This track has been worn smooth by the tramping of thousands and thousands of feet, and the greater part of the magnificent highway is never trodden.

There was some very hilly country to be traversed for our first day or two after leaving the Zambesi; but our porters stuck well to their task. These carriers had been recruited for us by the Companhia da Zambesia. We had been warned that they might endeavour to bolt, so we kept a watchful eye on them; but one or two turned out to be really excellent servants, and two went right up to Lake Bangweolo with me.

Two days after we had seen the last of the Zambesi we reached Chiuta, a Portuguese military post. Chiuta lies in rough, hilly country, and was commanded by a puny little sergeant possessed of tremendous pride in his responsibility.

Was he not the "O.C." of a citadel?—one, mark you, with wickerwork and timber ramparts and the pomp of sentry-boxes! When first I saw this gallant fellow he was standing at the doorway of his flimsy residence, holding a small pin-fire revolver out towards me. I almost mistook his intentions and nearly covered him; but presently the little man opened the weapon, and with a sweet confidence disclosed its emptiness. It took us a long time to ascertain the why and wherefore of this strange proceeding, for the sergeant's French was even worse than ours. Eventually, however, we realized that he wished us to give him a few rounds of ammunition. He had seen my Harrington-Richardson strapped to my belt (I was wearing this because of the raw and strange mob of porters we had with us), and presumably had imagined that all revolvers were of the same calibre. I convinced him after practical trials that my ·38 cartridges would not fit his murderous pop-gun, and after a while he ceased to worry about this calamity. He was in terror of a lion that, he told us, prowled around the hills at the back of the camp. His pin-fire pistol would have provided a very desperate means of defence! We lunched with this comical little commandant of the Post Militare e Civil of Chiuta, saw the spoon-shaped bastinadoes which, when occasion requires, are used to instil respect for Portugal into the native; and then we said "good-bye" over a bottle of *vino tinto*.

Portuguese East Africa is a hospitable country. In the most out-of-the-way *prazos* and posts the traveller is entertained with a liberality which shames less remote portions of the globe. And as to the cost of living, I find it recorded

in my diary that the day after leaving Chiuta we left the main North Road and travelled a native path, and that in the evening we purchased twenty-four eggs, forty-five pounds of mealie-meal, half a bottle of honey, monkey nuts, beans, and tomatoes galore for three stretches of limbo, or calico—equivalent to about one shilling and sixpence. What a country for the civil service pensioner! Guinea-fowl provided us with many a good meal on the way up, but buck we found very scarce. At the Chiritzi River a herd of stately koodoo broke past us, and we saw a few zebra, but our rifles registered clean misses, and we had to fall back on the eggs and tomatoes and a small partridge that I bagged just before dusk. At the Chiritzi our natives took elaborate precautions against lions, dragging thorns and bushes all round the camp.

The next river we crossed was the M'Poura, and then the Loangwa. The following morning the great rock mass of Mount N'Onza towered high above us. A few hard marches brought us to the Luia, a fast-flowing river twenty-five yards broad in the dry season and about double this width in the rains. I shot a brace of guinea-fowl, and then with Julius followed up the spoor of a water-buck along the banks of the river.

Here I made the acquaintance of the buffalo bean—a most diabolical yet harmless-looking member of the vegetable kingdom which must have been created with the express purpose of driving men mad. These beans are covered with fine, scarcely perceptible spines, which when liberated settle on one's flesh and set up the most maddening irritation conceivable. I quickly gave up the water-buck spoor, and dashed down

to the Luia. All the crocodiles of the Victoria Nyanza would not have kept me out of the water. Even then the irritation did not cease, and for quite two hours afterwards I was in torture.

It was almost dark when we left the Luia, and as neither Julius nor I knew where camp had been pitched, we wandered along native paths and yelled and shouted. Night fell, and it seemed as if we should have to spend a vigil in the bush. Now and then something crashed into the dense undergrowth along the edge of which we were feeling our way—bush-buck in all probability. My Angoni companion had been telling me of the fearless way he would act should a lion cross our path, but when his teeth chattered with fright at the noise of the buck dashing past us I did not exactly regard him as a satisfactory comrade with whom to spend a night in the forest. I banged off two or three shots in quick succession, hoping thereby to attract L.'s attention and get some idea of the whereabouts of the camp. There came back a faint answering report away to the north-east, and eventually I sat down to a substantial guinea-fowl dinner. Both on this and on another occasion when I was lost in the bush of North-Western Rhodesia (for a much longer period) I walked, as is usual with those who have lost their way in the bush, in a circle.

Trekking through Kaponga's village, I reached Chifumbaze the next afternoon. L., who had a touch of malaria, arrived in a "machilla" (hammock) which I sent back for him the following morning. Chifumbaze is a Portuguese *prazo*, or administrative post, encircled by high hills. It is a wild country, the centre of a district of

extraordinary interest. Game is fairly plentiful, and often when returning to the village in the evening, after a visit to the curious rock inscriptions or paintings which are to be found on several great granite masses at the foot of the hills, we heard the coarse gruff bark of koodoo. Here we were the guests of Mr. Carl Wiese, the pioneer of this little-known portion of Africa. Just recently I learned with great regret of his death in Berlin.

Chifumbaze is the centre of a mining district of great antiquity, and we visited two or three mines in the neighbourhood which were being opened up for Mr. Weise's company under the direction of Mr. Louis de Fries. Chief amongst these was the Maggie's Luck Mine, where a small stamp battery had been erected, and where a rather curious occurrence of gold in granite was being exploited. Close to the main open-cast on this property were enormous old underground galleries dug out by the miners of long, long ago —no doubt Phœnicians—in their search for the precious metal. A few miles from Chifumbaze alluvial gold had been found in the bed of the Vubwe River, and a number of turbulent spirits were encamped there. One or two of these were genuine diggers; others were the flotsam and jetsam of Africa, who had drifted on strange currents to a spot where mealie-meal could be commandeered without much difficulty, and where there was big game as well as gold to hunt for.

Save in the remote fastnesses of the Congo, cannibals are generally supposed to be creatures of an age that has passed away; but just before we arrived at Chifumbaze a number of men had been brought in, roped and bound, by inhabitants of the surrounding kraals, and delivered up to

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NATIVE ARCHER; PORTUGUESE NORTHERN ZAMBESIA

the *prazo* Administrator with a request that he would deport them to some land from which they could never return. These man-eaters, it was said, were in the habit of robing themselves in the skins of wild animals, entering huts at night and carrying away and devouring their own kith and kin. I saw a photograph of these pleasing gentry, and their faces were truly those of devils or savage beasts. It is significant that their wives and children refused to depart with them.

CHAPTER V

NORTH-EASTERN RHODESIA—IN EXILE

NORTH-EASTERN RHODESIA is a less-travelled territory than the sister dependency of North-Western. It is less accessible, more unhealthy, and therefore more wild and unexploited. In 1909 L. and I reached its capital, Fort Jameson.

For twenty-three days we had been trudging along the weary road that leads from sleepy, old-world Tete to the highlands of Angonia. Day by day the broad, sun-kissed waters of the Zambesi had been left farther and farther behind, and the blue hills of the plateau had drawn nearer and nearer. We were tired and foot-sore. One of our little party lay in a crudely constructed "machilla," sick almost unto death, and we two others tramped and tramped along the great white road, the only highway in that world of byways. We pulled ourselves through the hills, then after we had crossed a little river we saw Fort Jameson before us. If you were to ask me which was the most English-looking place in Africa, I should answer Fort Jameson. Even to-day, when the vision of its red-brick bungalows covered with creepers, its church with the turreted towers and aged "West Countrie" appearance, its Government House with the park-like grounds sloping away in front of it, and its broad, peaceful streets, all hemmed in by the towering hills draped with bush and shrub, is not so keen as it

was when first I fell captive to its charms, I cannot help associating Fort Jameson with some village towns where I have lived in Cornwall and Devon. And when I saw Fort Jameson that day I thought that the Fal or the Tamar might lie but the other side of the ridges, and that a duck-pond was sadly missing in the main street. There is no village pump in Fort Jameson, but there is a township well, and though the inn lacks a signboard and many of the little distinctions of the English rural tavern, it is wholly in keeping with the general provincial British appearance of the place.

Involuntarily one almost expects to observe villagers in smocks returning begrimed and weary from the ploughs, and it is when you actually see the " villagers " that the idol you have been worshipping falls to the ground and you awake to the fact that this, after all, is not England but Central Africa, that Fort Jameson is the capital of North-Eastern Rhodesia and not a West-country village, and that the villagers have black faces instead of white, and their smocks are white instead of blue. For the influence of the East Coast has imprinted itself deeply on the native inhabitants of the town, just as the English minds of the white officials have given the church, the houses, and the streets such a look of England. Each has carried with him the memories of his home-land. The white man painted them on his dwellings, and the native has maintained them in his long, flowing white Swahili robes. Here are aliens to this civic life. Coal-black Awemba bringing ivory from the North sit down on the pavement before the African Lakes Corporation store, waiting for return loads to Tanganyika. Down the road

pass a score of Awisa from the Luangwa Valley carrying bales of cotton on their heads. A white official, flanneled and warm, hurries across to the Boma, or Government offices, above which the Union Jack hangs drowsily, now and then stirred by a faint breeze. A smart khaki-clad askari (native policeman) hurries across to the Administrator's residence—the manor-house of the village—bent on some official errand.

When the fiery sun sinks behind the Kapatamoyo hills, and red shafts of its departing glory pierce the darkening sky, the ceremony of saluting and hauling down the flag in front of the Boma is performed with all due pomp and circumstance by the stalwart blacks of the North-Eastern Rhodesia Constabulary. The bugles blow out a blast, and then the fife and drum band plays "God save the King." You uncover your head and ponder on the might of the Empire and the strength of that rule which can call forth the hymn of loyalty to a monarch 6,000 miles away from his blackest subjects in remotest Central Africa.

Down the main street marches the band, and as they swing along, the fifes merrily break forth into one of Harry Lauder's songs. Rat-tat-tat go the kettle-drums, and a crowd of natives run along with the constabulary as children follow a circus in country England. One great fellow with a magnificent leopard skin—drum-major of the band—attracts your attention immediately. He thumps the big drum with prodigious strength and throws out his chest with conscious pride. Many a dusky glance of admiration and affection is thrown his way, but mindful only of his duty he takes no notice of the thick lips parted in a coquettish smile, or the pearl-white teeth—not until afterwards, that is.

Night falls over the little town, the largest outpost of Empire in this part of Africa, and at the same time one of the smallest capitals of Greater Britain. Outside Government House, the Boma and the gaol, the soft tread of the unshodden askaris falls lightly on the peaceful evening, and occasionally the silence is broken by the challenge delivered in very passable English, "Halt! Who go there?" and the inevitable (I have written "inevitable" because I think the reply would be the same even were you to answer "German spy") "Pass, friend; all well." A gramophone sends a thrill from Tosti's "Good-bye" across the Kapatamoyo hills, the bugles in the police camp sound "Lights out," and then all is silence, deep and absolute. Now and then the peace of night which hangs over Fort Jameson with that infinite charm, that soothing, solemn stillness which is never known in the world's great throbbing arteries of life, is broken by the deep, low grunt of a lion, or the ugly belch of a leopard away in the wreath of rocky hills. These wild noises of the night serve to remind one that only a few years ago M'Pezeni, paramount chief of the Angoni, ruled with a hand of blood from his slaughter kraals where now the cluster of brick houses has been raised in advancement of the Empire. Maybe the spirit of M'Pezeni haunts the Kapatamoyo hills, and at night hovers over the land which once was his, just as M'Zilikazi's ghost haunts the Matopos, and, according to the Matabele, holds "indabas" with the spirit of Cecil Rhodes, whose mortal body lies beneath the granite of those rugged hills in the grandest grave that ever was hewn for man.

Perhaps M'Pezeni's spirit wails in sorrowful

rage at the little oasis of civilization in a desert of primeval paganism, a cluster of palms in the wilderness. For such it is. From the main street of the little town you may see the kingly koodoo in the surrounding hills. Yet here is the pulse of an Administration which rules a territory nearly 500 miles long and over 300 miles from east to west. That pulse may beat but slowly, yet it sends a flow of British justice to far-away Mweru, even to the waters of Tanganyika. Those who have to live in Fort Jameson for years at a time may despise the sleepy monotony of its ways, enlivened only by a "ulendo" (journey) to the Luangwa in quest of big game, or the arrival from England or departure of some official on leave. But to me there is a distinct charm about Fort Jameson and its people which time will not efface from my memory. I think of it as a primrose growing in the burnt stubble of the African forests and plains.

Life in Fort Jameson is, of course, vastly more eventful than in the outlying stations. Picture to yourself the lonely Native Commissioner cut off from his kith and kin. Realize his surroundings. Imagine the utter dreariness of his existence. As I write there comes vividly before me a picture of a typical "Boma" on the fringes of the Awemba country.

Imagine a belt of bushes surrounding a square-cut clearing, in the centre of which the Union Jack floats listlessly on the hot, feeble breeze. Around the square a number of red-brick buildings and wattle-and-daub huts range themselves against a background of green and bronze leaves, scattered and stunted bushes, and rocky little hillocks. In the centre of the square are four or five well-set-up negroes, clad in khaki;

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CUTTING UP A HIPPO; LUANGWA RIVER

with bandoliers around their shoulders and long, well-cared-for Sniders resting against the flag-pole. It is dusk, and the glories of the dying African sun throw a long blaze of crimson and gold across the western sky and tinge the bronze of the mopani trees with a blood-red hue. One of the khaki-clad figures cries "'Tenshun!" in a way which is strangely reminiscent of your old school sergeant-instructor, another lifts a shining bugle to his lips, and the remainder gather in the Sniders to their shoulders and draw up their well-proportioned bodies with a show of dignity which you cannot fail to remark on. The sergeant of the "askaris," as our Central African troops and Constabulary are termed, shouts "Pleesent alms!" the bugler blows a fairly creditable blast, and the sergeant hauls down the Union Jack, which is reverently folded up and placed in the mud-covered guard-room for the night.

Such a scene is not uncommon in Central Africa. Throughout much of the great continent there are Bomas, or administrative stations, where we have established outposts of the Empire, one of the necessary obligations that has fallen on all nations and all peoples who have assumed that task of great magnitude which has so aptly been termed "the white man's burden."

And yet how few there are who realize what that burden implies, what strength of character and moral resolution are required to carry it with dignity and purpose! And what does the average Britisher know of the men who are carrying that burden for his nation, lifting the load over obstacles which double its weight, and when their race is run are quietly and unpretentiously handing on the burden to another?

Some day Britannia will count up the services

of her unrewarded servants, and she will find that of these no branch of her labourers has striven so hard and so honourably as those quiet, unassuming men who lead their lonely lives in the remotest corners of Africa.

Cut off from mankind, severed from their kith and kin, surrounded by a host of savages, beset by a multitude of troubles and temptations, the lot of the Central African Native Commissioner is one which few of their stay-at-home critics can ever realize.

Let us turn again for a minute to the little clean-swept square in front of the Boma, where the flag lazily unfolds itself as the hot breath of the tropics wafts through the air, day after day and year after year. The red and white and blue bring to the resident of those grass-thatched houses the memory of the Homeland, and act as an inspiration to him in more than one battle which it is the lot of all the solitary souls of Central Africa to fight. He is probably a public-school man and a product of Oxford or Cambridge, as you would quickly realize were you to peep into the privacy of one of those low-eaved rooms. Photographs of old house and college clubs, rugger caps and silver cups are keeping company with rhinoceros horns and leopard skins. There are neat little bookshelves of novels and a table littered with *Sketches* and *Fields*—ties with the throbbing life of the Motherland.

Yesterday, to-day, to-morrow, next week, next month are all the same to the subject of this sketch. There are crimes to be punished, petty disputes to be settled, the sick to be tended, the reports to a far-away administrator to be written. A native chief comes respectfully into

the little office and submits a festered foot for inspection. The solitary steward anoints and binds the wound. A woman lays a charge of theft against another and pleads for justice. Perhaps it is only a broken calabash, but the lonely representative of law and right must unweave the tangled meshes of evidence through many knots of lies in the search for that truth for which his Mistress stands.

At times he sallies forth into the great forests, plains and swamps of his division to collect the taxes which his race demands in return for his presence. Wild beasts and wild peoples are his consorts, and when fever seizes him and the grim wings of death hover perilously near, the only nurse to lead him along the narrow path to recovery is a small bottle bearing the symbol "quinine."

But perhaps that ministering influence has already used up all its ability, and then there is merely a little grave alongside some native path to signify that here a white man found his burden too heavy to carry, and quietly laid it down for other hands to bear.

If you were to ask his friends and relatives in the land of his birth where he was or what he was doing, they would probably reply; "Oh, M! Yes, let me see. He is somewhere out in Africa doing something or other. To tell you the truth I can't quite tell you whether he is in Rhodesia or Sierra Leone, but it's somewhere in that district, you know!" Perhaps M. comes home one day—no doubt weakened with sickness, more thoughtful, less communicative than when his health was toasted at the farewell dinner, and his old friends told him that he was a

fool to disappear into some unknown country when he had such an excellent chance of getting his "International" next year. They will be mystified at his admissions that he did not "look up S. who is stationed at Potchefstroom," or "run down to Cape Town to stay with the T——s for a week." They will be still more amazed when he tells them that he has never been to these places because they are 2,000 miles away from his Boma.

Our guardians of the fringes of Greater Britain are men who have that most relentless enemy of the solitary to fight in many different forms and directions. Monotony is that foe, and no one can realize the sharpness of its weapons until he has listened for week after week to the never-ceasing patter of the rain on the African soil, and has not seen the face of one of his own people for many dreary months.

There is the demon of insanity lurking behind the walls of every solitary steward's habitation. The morphia fiend knocks at the door of isolation, and lust, craving, the desire for anything which will lighten the load of banishment, are for ever saying, "We are no parts of your burden. Put down the heavy weight of dignity and carry us instead."

Away in the storm-swept square the red and the white and the blue, soaked and bedraggled, are waving around in the wake of a scurrying whirlwind. Perhaps the bearer of the white man's burden will forget that the flag is still an emblem of nation, although it seems to have lost some of its sense of calm, unassailed dignity.

Perhaps he will lay that white man's burden

on the ground for a while and will rest his labours in the soothing seduction of one of his tempters.

Civilization has many ears, and they are always open; but you may remark that his severest critics have never carried a heavy load in the world's steep places.

If you have realized all the loneliness and monotony and hardship in the foregoing you will not be surprised if I lead you a step further, and let you gaze on another up-country post and another scene, but in quite another part of Africa, often the sorry corollary of solitude.

The fiery sun had just sunk below the bronze belt of Mopani over towards the Great River. Across the dusky skies bands of crimson and orange had flung the glories of a Central African evening, and a few spur-winged geese came rushing over the river as if they feared their roosting-place would vanish with the night. Their phantom-like forms had just disappeared into the gloaming shadows, when three men crossed the crude bridge thrown over the stream and sauntered up the little slope to a long, low-lying white hut with a capacious "stoep"—the residence of the Boma doctor. He was the only representative of medicine in a country as large as England, and the whole attitude and demeanour of the man gave one the impression that he realized the immensity of his task, the futility of the fight he waged against the illimitable powers of vindictive nature. Tall and worn, he greeted his guests from the depths of a cleverly-made native deck chair. No introductions were needed as far as they were concerned, for these four men had for years shared

the common burial of their existences. There was X., the Native Commissioner, and Y., the trader and elephant hunter, and Z—well, who Z. was, not even the doctor or X. or Y. could tell you.

Presently cigarettes were alight and Medicine, the host, shouted for his native servants. "Well, you chaps," he remarked, as he wearily rose in his chair, "what is it to be—'Black and White' or morphia?"

"Morphia," replied the end of the alphabet, and morphia they all took.

Maniacs, you will call them, and so they were. But remember their banishment and the infinite monotony which was the cause of their madness, and condemn them not too harshly unless you, too, have tasted of the fruits of exile.

One day the hand of Y. will falter when the monarch of all beasts comes tearing through the forest, his great trunk raised and a badly placed bullet goading him on to kill the meagre, terrified thing in front of him. And then, although Y. has killed his hundred elephants, he will meet his fate in the most agonized terror conceivable. The Native Commissioner will be sent home by a watchful Administration, with our medical friend to tend him.

As for Z., poor fellow, he has already finished his last "ulendo,"* for the dread wings of sleeping sickness fastened on his wasted frame and carried the driftwood away to another great ocean, on the unknown waters of which we must all embark.

I met such an one as Z. in the first place close to the Luangwa one mid-day when the sun scorched the very air, and the thermometer

* *Ulendo*, Chinyanga, lit. a journey.

registered over 112° in the shade. Many lonely nights had I passed, and many weary miles had I trudged in silence, my mind one dismal blank.

Unless one has been severed from his own race for many days, has watched the sun sink over the tropical forest belts and plains of Central Africa for night after night, with never a companion of his own colour to sit by the camp-fire and smoke the evening pipe, it is impossible to realize the feeling of excitement and almost delirious joy experienced when one day a white man, arrayed in the same ragged garments as yourself, meets you in some remote corner of the great continent, and shakes your hand with that grip of true sincerity which is more often felt in little-trodden paths than on the highways of civilization. Under such circumstances strong and ordinarily unemotional men have been known to embrace one another. Z. was a quaint figure with his curiously-trimmed little beard, hair long and dishevelled and face the colour of parchment. But he was an even more strange man to talk to. He rattled away on every conceivable subject, from the length of rhino horns to the tonnage of Dreadnoughts, and from Napoleon to Baobab trees. He carried with him, moreover, a library which I had little expected to find in an Awisa village in the Luangwa Valley. Emerson and Shakespeare and Browning were packed away with cartridges and tins of jam, and after much trouble he unearthed for me Milton from the bottom of a bag of salt. At times his conversation wandered in a most bewildering manner. He would suddenly break off in the middle of a most interesting discourse on the merits of some particular rifle, and tell me how he had been arrested by Belgian officials in the Congo. Yes,

he knew the mysterious Congo, and the gloomy swamps; he had navigated Tanganyika, and had indeed been as far north as Mumias on the old ivory route from Victoria Nyanza to Mount Elgon and Southern Abyssinia.

After a while he would stop exhausted and run his fingers through his extraordinarily long hair. His breath would come in short, sharp gasps, and I felt at times that I stood very near the last milestone of his wanderings.

Elephant spoor led me far away from him, and then we met again at a little administrative post where two other exiles had established themselves. There was again something indefinably pathetic about him. His mind wandered nearly as much as his feet had, and there dawned on me the thought that sleeping sickness and morphia had claimed him for their own. And so they had. He died a month or two afterwards with the desire of his beloved Africa as deep in him as when he first felt her wondrous fascination. I have often thought of Central Africa as a huge lamp of death, and those who once get a glamour of her vast lands as the poor moths of mankind that will for ever hover round her, until they destroy their lives in a hopeless endeavour to probe the mystery of her attractions. Poor Z. was but one of the moths, and I do not suppose that his corpse will deter one other from journeying on his last "ulendo" when the subtle influence of the great continent has buried itself in the soul of his desires.

Happily for the world, it is a thin partition that separates tragedy from comedy. Old Y. was often a humorous person. And in a remarkable degree he possessed one of the essential qualifica-

tions of the true African pioneer—that he should be able to tell a large number of really remarkable lion stories, just as the old hand in the south-western portions of the United States of America is not deemed of very much account unless he can relate, at a moment's notice, a long series of hair-raising experiences with rattlesnakes. It is not for me to judge between the two types—I do not know enough of the genuine Arizona product. But I do know that some of the lion yarns in circulation in Central Africa indicate remarkably queer traits in the character of the King of Beasts—little whims and ways concerning which the world's greatest zoologists are plunged in an ignorance profoundly dark. For instance, I do not for a moment suppose that Lankester or Lydekker have ever—even in their wildest dreams—conceived the idea of a lion sneezing himself to death. And yet Y. assured me, the first night I met him, that he had killed scores of lions by providing them with an excuse for sneezing. Being just the least little bit sceptical I ventured to ask him how it was done. Y. puffed thoughtfully at his pipe for a moment or two, and then—"Why," said he, "it's the easiest thing in the world. You just build a little arch out of jagged rocks, in the middle of the bush; then you kill a zebra or a buck, and put him under the arch. You must be careful that the centre stone of the arch is exceedingly jagged, and that the opening in the pile of stones is large enough to allow a lion to crawl in. After this, you throw a lot of pepper all over the 'kill,' and then—well, then, if there are any lions about, you're sure to get one." Although I did not like to brandish my ignorance

in the man's face, I could not help asking for a little further explanation. He looked at me in a sympathetic manner, and went on to make the whole matter plain. "Well," said he, "what would you do if you suddenly shoved your nose into the middle of a high-grade cayenne pepper proposition? Sneeze, wouldn't you? Of course you would, and—so does the bally lion! Now as soon as you start to sneeze, you chuck your head up, don't you? Well, so does the bally lion, and, of course, he dashes his brains in against the jagged stone of the arch!"

Questioned as to his record lion bag in one night, the hero of the foregoing narrative remarked, "Never more than five between dusk and dawn with the pepper trick, young man; but I remember killing fifteen in a quarter of an hour, back in '91, with a rifle. It was this way," he went on. "I was camped on the Angwa River one dark night, and the lions were grunting all round my camp. There was a little mound just in front of my tent, and presently I saw two beads of fire peering at me over the mound. I knew there was a lion close at hand, so I loaded my Martini and fired—fired right between the eyes. I'm a pretty fair shot, I am, and I knew I'd hit; but when I looked again there were them two beads still peerin' at me out of the dark. 'Queer,' I remarked to myself, and got in a second shot. But the eyes were still there. Again I took a careful aim and pulled the trigger, and still the beads stared at me. Well, to cut a long story short, I fired fourteen times, and after the fourteenth shot I was, as you may imagine, fairly disgusted at what I thought was my wicked shooting. 'Here goes for the last attempt,'

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PUKU ANTELOPE, A WATER-LOVING BUCK; NORTHERN RHODESIA

I muttered. Bang! and I chucked the gun away expecting still to see the eyes of that confounded lion looking at me. But no—the beads had gone, and I went to bed saying, 'Well, at last I've done for the brute, but what shocking shooting!" Next mornin'—would you believe me!—I found eight lions and seven lionesses lying dead, all bunched together behind the mound. The brutes had evidently come up, one after the other, to see what all the banging and killing was about; so my eye wasn't dead out that night, after all! Just shows how a man can be deceived!"

Perhaps Y.'s most curious adventures happened in the Congo Free State. Some years ago he was concluding a very successful ivory-hunting and trading expedition, and was anxious to reach some trading post in British territory, where he could dispose of his spoils. Having no wish to come in contact with Belgian officials, he travelled through a dry, uninhabited region where game was exceedingly scarce. Y. and his "tenga tengas" (porters) had a very bad time, and nearly died from thirst and starvation. At last he reached a village one night and summoned the old chief. Y. told him he was very hungry and that he must have some meat, in return for which he would give the chief a "prizee" in the form of "n'salu" (cloth). The chief retired, sent over something to Y.'s cook-boy, and presently a boiling in the pot announced to Y., now silently puffing at his pipe, that he was to have something to eat. Ravenously hungry, he devoured the repast, and enjoyed it so much that he sent for more.

Presently the "cookie" served up the second helping, and Y. devoured that too. Later the chief came over for his reward, and Y. asked him what particular kind of "n'yama *" it was which he had eaten. "Bwana (master)," replied the old man, "that was my *cousin!*"

* Meat.

CHAPTER VI

NORTH-EASTERN RHODESIA (CONTINUED): EQUATORIAL FABLES—THE JOYS OF FREEDOM

THE greater part of my time in 1909 was spent in the Luangwa Valley, where sleeping sickness is now at its fell work. Here amongst the magnificent herds of great game, the tropical scenery and the primitive Awisa I enjoyed many an interesting week. I do not know which of these I found the more engaging—perhaps the natives.

There are few more interesting studies in Africa than the study of native folk-lore. The Central African natives have their own fairy stories just as the children of Europe have their own ingenious fiction of Grimm and Hans Andersen wherewith to while away the passing hour, and wonderfully interesting some of these Equatorial fables are. All Central Africans in reality are children, and all hear the anecdotes of how the rhinoceros lost his third horn, or how the Chameleon brought disease and death into the world, with rapt attention. Nearly every village has a story-teller, and on every "ulendo," or caravan, you will find one who can draw forth loud grunts of applause from the listeners round the camp-fire.

No creature of creation is the subject of so much romance as the Chameleon. If you have been in Africa, you will have noticed that the native loathes this curious insect-reptile with his

great staring eyes and the fickle glories of his skin, and if you have ever picked one up and put it on your shoulder or your hat, you may have observed that your "boys" gazed on you with mixed expressions of fear and disgust. For the Chameleon is to them what the serpent in the garden of Eden is to us—a perpetual reminder of the great error made by mankind in the beginnings of things, an error which has irrevocably changed the first laws of the Creator and has brought sickness, suffering and sin into this world of sorrows.

The story of the Chameleon, the third chapter of the Bantu Genesis, is known over a great portion of Africa, although there are varying versions in different parts of the Continent. But the most universally accepted tale is that in the beginning of things man only died in war, in battle with man or wild beasts. Sickness was unknown, and the people multiplied and multiplied so that the crops of the world were insufficient to feed them. Then the rulers of mankind joined together, and in solemn and secret conference agreed to send the Lizard on a mission to the Deity, praying that death should come about by means other than those of violence. "There will be more food for the survivors," said the sages of first government. And so the Lizard went his way.

But there was one member of that secret gathering who, like some members of secret conferences in our own day, was unable to respect the mighty trust reposed in him. He talked, and a furious and amazed populace held an indignation meeting, at which it was decided to appeal against the unauthorized petition carried by the Lizard.

By a curious piece of misfortune the Chameleon was elected to carry this appeal. He was threatened and coaxed, and at last he set off with most definite instructions as to his mission, and the pleas and commands of the world at large that he was to "m'sanga! m'sanga!" (hurry! hurry!). He went a little way, and lo! he found a swarm of gnats. He fed and then indulged in a very lengthy siesta. Eventually he was ushered into the presence of the Deity, and he delivered his appeal. "Alas," said the Deity, "you are many moons too late. Long ago the Lizard came here, and I have already sent into the world my legions of sickness and lingering death."

There is another version of this pretty primitive tale in which the Chameleon is held to blame for the black skin of the negro. Originally he was white, and it was only because of the dawdlings of the Chameleon on an important mission to the Deity that his complexion was changed to black. And thus it is that the Chameleon—"lumfwe" of the Awemba and "gorumankwe" of the Angoni—is so greatly loathed.

The Swazis, too, have a somewhat similar legend, but with them the particular *bête noire* of their "In the beginning" is a small lizard with a red tail, on which they wage a perpetual warfare of extinction, but still the lizard runs around their kraals and seems to brandish his appalling crime in their faces.

Of quite a different nature is the Book of Genesis of the Masai, those lithe, ochre-stained savages who a few years ago were the terror of all East Africa. Amongst their serfs were the N'Derobo, a curious people who live in the depths of the great forests of the escarpments

of Eastern Equatorial Africa, so shy, so wonderfully active, that they may well be termed the squirrels of mankind. Even to this day, the N'Derobo stand in some ill-defined servile relationship to the Masai. The first lines in the book of Creation, according to these warlike overlords, are not properly understood by Europeans, indeed the number of white men who have acquired any true insight into the intricacies of the beautiful language of the Masai—so full of *l*'s and *o*'s that many of the words are as the sound of laughing waters—is exceedingly few. In their Book of Genesis the actors in the first scene in the great tragedy of creation are a Masai "el moran" (or warrior), a N'Derobo slave and an ox. The ox was let down from heaven by the Deity, but I fear I am unable to puruse the fable further, for I have but little knowledge of it.

Exodus, too, has its native versions as well as Genesis. The second chapter of the second book of Moses has a rendering in the far northern parts of Rhodesia which, although it represents a considerable distortion of the story in the Old Testament, is unmistakably a parallel.

Just as the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river and found the ark among the flags with Moses inside it, so did some dusky daughter of a great chief in the dim long ago find a baby in a little boat among the reeds, and the baby, like Moses, grew up to be the deliverer of his race from the oppressors.

There is a fascination about these fables of the Equator which makes them subjects of extraordinary interest. There are many people who suppose that the African native has no sense or appreciation of the romantic, and that

the mind of the baby Bantu is not nourished on fairy tales and little conundrums like enlightened John Jones, aged four. But these views are wholly wrong. The tales of the African child grow up with him just as the bean-stalks and the giant-killers linger in our memories long after we have given up the toys of the nursery for the sterner playthings of life. Our riddles remain with us throughout the enigma of existence; and so do the sayings of the native, his conundrums and proverbs give him ready-made philosophy and wit when the happy days of childhood have been exchanged for the no less happy days of man's estate.

"Nyumbu yopanda chitseko?" (The house without a door?) queries one, and another answers, "Dzera" (an egg).

"Kantu cosa mangeka?" (A thing you cannot tie up?), says the old chief, and logic falls from the lips of one of his wives when she replies, "M'Pepo" (the wind).

"Kantu cosa nyambula?" he remarks (A thing you cannot lift?). Reason beneath a score of ugly wrinkles answers, "Chintunsi-tunsi" (a shadow).

"The white man makes a big fire and sits a long way from it, but the black man lights a little one and sits close to it," says the Central African native. The truth of this remark must be manifest to all who have wandered through the interior and have lounged back in a comfortable deck chair at a respectful distance from a great, blazing pile of logs, whilst, squatting close around a number of small fires, the "tenga tengas" (porters)—the sinews of the expedition—while away the evening with jest and gesture, their feet almost in the flames. And when the

cool night winds sigh through the forest their woolly heads, you may observe, rest so close to the heated embers that you will wonder how it is they do not burn as well. But there is far more in the simple expression than is evident in this little elucidation of the strictly literal purport of the remark. We of the white race are at infinite pains and ruinous expenditure to rear up unto ourselves gigantic edifices, and when we have built them we feel lonely within their portals. We fuss and fret to gain ourselves pleasures and comforts, and when we have secured them we fear to reap the full measure of our joys. In short, we kindle titanic furnaces at sacrifice of a tremendous amount of labour and time and expense, and then the heat is so great that it drives us from it. And the negro in his primitive wisdom concerns himself only with those toys which he can indulge in to his heart's content, builds grass huts at a minimum of trouble, lights his little fires in the middle of them and sits over the warming flames. And who do you think is the wiser?

Those who do not know the Central African native are far too apt to assign to him an ignorance which he does not possess, and to imagine him incapable of any wisdom or reasoning which exceeds that of the beasts of the fields. The dwellers of the mysterious interior have no literature, but they have their stories, and the folk-lore of Central Africa is the most interesting in the world. They have their music, too, and although you might not appreciate the wondrous fascination of the soft sibilant chants or the deep roar of the chorus if you heard it on the stage of a music-hall, you would, in Central Africa, listen entranced to the march song of a "ulendo,"

the mellow notes of the primitive instruments—bits of iron fastened on to a piece of wood and stretched over a calabash—or the song of the women as they pound up the grain in receptacles constructed out of the hollowed-out trunk of a tree. One woman—the picture of grace and proud carriage—raises the pounding pole and brings it down with all the force of her muscular body on the grain. She raises it with a quick and graceful movement and her companion's pole takes its place.

And as they pound they sing in a sweet, clear monotone—

"Chiuli iwe, chiuli iwe
M'Buyache, m'buyache,
Chiuli iwe, chiuli iwe
Itana m'kadzachi."

You may note the perfect poetry of the song, a poetry which is paralleled only by the graceful movements of the grain-beaters.

And then the chorus—

"Chiuli kusesa
Itana m'kadzi chiuli."

Such is the Central African grain song. It is, I suppose, a sort of Equatorial nursery rhyme, for you may observe the rapt attention of the children, a look of admiring appreciation on their faces as they listen to the song of their mothers. "Chiuli" is the frog, and the song concerns him and his friend "calling his wife."

"Chiuli kusinga,"
Frog grind up the food.
"Chiuli kusesa,"
Frog sweep (the house).

That is the chorus, and I imagine the moral and meaning of the ditty is that the frog looks for his wife to labour on his behalf, just as the women grind up the food whilst their lords and masters sit themselves in the doors of their huts and idle away the happy sunshine of their lives.

The natives of Africa have their tales and their fables, their music and their poetry, their philosophy and their proverbs, just as we have, and I am not at all sure but that their fairy tales are more entrancing than are ours, that their music and poetry are more fascinating, and that their proverbs are more wise than those on which we pride ourselves. And they have their prophets, too, just as we have our magicians and clairvoyants, and they are more wonderful than any we can boast of.

Along the banks of the Kafue River dwell the people of the famous Mushukulumbwe tribe, so called by the Barotse because of the curious horn-shaped growth of their hair on the fore part of their heads.

These fierce savages—the people from whom Selous and Holub had such narrow escapes many years ago, and who are greatly feared by the neighbouring tribes—are the Baila, and their language is called Chila.

The Baila are a strange people. They have intermingled with no other tribes, and are, in fact, amongst the most insular people in Africa. For miles round the Mushukulumbwe country the land is uninhabited. There is no paramount chief of the Mushukulumbwe as there is with most other African tribes. Each village has its own headman who pays homage to none. In the past the Mushukulumbwe have fought bitterly

amongst one another, but they are now fairly pacific.

The Chila language is believed by authorities to be amongst the very oldest in all Bantu Africa. But there is an archaic form of Chila which is only understood by a very few old chiefs, and is spoken by none when in normal condition. Certain of the Baila prophets, however, possess the faculty of throwing themselves into a trance. Apparently no drugs or herbs are used, the action is quite spontaneous, and when in this trance they prophesy in this dead language.

Here we have some evidence of transmigration which is as strong as anything in our philosophy of the occult. Reincarnation is a common belief all over Africa. The Awemba, for instance, will tell you that there are two kinds of lions—the n'kalamu, or ordinary hunting lion, and the chisenguka, or man-eater, into which type have departed the spirits of their dead chiefs.

It is not for us to scoff at these ideas, for many of the white race profess a more weird belief than this. Nor can we deride the strange attraction of the Central African's music or the simple beauty of his fairy tales. They are all so barbarously natural that our own elevated parallels fall harsh and affected on the senses by comparison. We have not the true insight into Nature which the African has. He who wishes to understand Nature must live with her, just as he who desires the full heat of a fire must sit close by it. And we who build big fires sit a long way from them.

Late one afternoon I reached N'Tantá's, a village of the Awisa tribe, situated on one of the backwaters of the Luangwa River. For days I had been " spooring " a wounded elephant, and

I was not sorry to rest for a while under the great shady trees which surround the little cluster of grass huts of N'Tanta's people. Presently the old chief came up to greet me. He was a picturesque figure, and I could not help wondering how many years had gone over his head, then crowned by a dirty, well-worn turban, once, no doubt, red, but then a brilliant pink in colour. His skin was wrinkled and furrowed with age, and his stubbly gray beard showed indeed that he was a father of his people. That turban was, no doubt, given him by a party of Arab elephant hunters, who, a quarter of a century ago, overran Central Africa, collecting ivory and slaves for the Zanzibar markets. Old N'Tanta had been a mighty hunter in his day, and when I told him that I had for long been following a wounded elephant with very big tusks, he assured me that his people would find the animal for me next day. The Central African native, be he chief or menial, will invariably tell you just what he thinks will be most pleasing to your ears, and I found old N'Tanta no exception to this rule.

Presently he saluted me in the true and orthodox native style—a style which, should you wander much over Africa, you will notice has no part in the philosophy of the civilized African. A minute afterwards he had disappeared amongst the huts. By-and-by he returned with one or two headmen, each bearing a skinny fowl, a few eggs, and a basket of sweet potatoes—presents for the white man. I gave him some cloth and antelope meat in exchange, and as a smile of satisfaction curled round the twisted corners of his mouth I again fell to

wondering on his age. But N'Tanta, of course, had no fitting sense of his antiquity. He could remember when on both banks of the Luangwa great herds of buffalo roamed in such numbers that the "dambos," or little open clearings in the bush, were black with them. That was before the "great sickness" (rinderpest) came over the land and decimated the herds. He could remember, too, a white man—the first he had ever seen—who had stayed for a while under the very tree which now afforded me shade. That was a long, long time ago, but he remembered the sojourn of the weary traveller well. The white man's attendants loved him, and said that he had come into this world to break the yoke of the slave raiders. N'Tanta had heard that this man had afterwards died near the great lake which lay several days west of his village, and that his heart had been buried there, while his body had been carried to the coast. But N'Tanta could remember events which took place long before the rinderpest swept over the country, long before David Livingstone had written his name in great letters of noble achievement over the heart of his beloved Africa. Back in the recesses of N'Tanta's memory were visions of the coming of a terrible tribe of people over the crests of the far-away Muchingas, and the old man shook his head as he spoke of their cruel raids and bloody conquests. As the sun began to sink over the western forest land he hobbled off to his newly-thatched hut, and throughout the shadows of dusk I watched him contentedly sitting in front of his inglorious home, still shaking his head and ejaculating to himself over the eventful memories of the past.

With the first crimson flush of the tropical dawn I saw N'Tanta bring out a burning ember from his hut and kindle a small fire. A dirty piece of calico was wrapped round his shrivelled-up body, and he crouched over the little flames and waited for the warmth of the African sun. Year after year he has stretched himself out on a cleverly woven grass mat and basked in the heat of the day. He has no cares, no thought for the morrow, no regrets for the past. His grandchildren work for him in the gardens, and his great-grandchildren play round in the soil of his own little piece of the earth. In our acceptance of the word he is not rich, but he has no need of work. We may regard him as a poor ignorant heathen, but he has more knowledge of that great jewel of life called contentment than we who live in the strenuous highways of this world can ever have. Perhaps you will marvel at the absolute inaction of his life, but remember that monotony, like pleasure and sorrow, is wholly relative.

One day old N'Tanta will lie stark and still under the grass roofs of his home. There will be weeping and wailing amongst his people, and presently his aged body will be reverently carried to the confines of the village and laid to rest in a shallow grave. Over this will be built a dwarf hut, and inside its walls will be placed an earthenware pot full of water, and perhaps some food, drink and meat for the departed spirit. When night falls there will be a big beer drink in the village, and the monotonous beat of the drums will mingle with the queer laughing grunts of the hippopotamus disporting himself in the waters of the Luangwa. Not until dawn will the drummers stay their hands, and with the

first gleam of light another miniature monarch will rise in the place of the dead chief.

The life of old N'Tanta is typical of the people who inhabit the valley of the Luangwa, and for the matter of that of the whole of Central Africa. I do not think it can be called uneventful, and it is certainly not without its own peculiar interest. Perhaps you will term it a life of no consequence, and yet I think it possesses some features which are worthy of the consideration of the most highly civilized mortals of this age. Even the primitive native of Central Africa can teach us something, for in his natural state he is the most satisfied of all the races of the world. We may scorn his nakedness and his poverty, but the mad onward rush of modern life does not permit us to know of the unsullied joys of unfettered freedom, and they are surely his.

CHAPTER VII

NORTH-EASTERN RHODESIA (CONTINUED)
IN THE GRIP OF THE WILDS

THERE were large numbers of elephants in the Luangwa Valley in the latter part of 1909, and I spent much time hunting them and observing their habits. What an intensely interesting and almost human document the life story of one of these great beasts would make! We can imagine the birth of the baby pachyderm in some remote valley fastness between the Muchingas and the Chinicoatali Mountains, the upbringing of the little Titan, and then the memorable day when his mother led him from the foothills and out into the " dambos " and bush.

He remembered that well, because he had never before undertaken such a journey. The next day the herd crossed the fringe of those great plains which surround the swamped lands of the lake. There were no trees to afford them shade in the heat of the day on this great monotonous expanse of land, where the grass was grazed down almost to the roots by countless herds of zebra and tsessebe. His grown-up consorts therefore did not halt for a mid-day siesta on the plains, but all day and all night they moved at a great, long, striding pace which taxed him sorely to make. Presently they began to ascend the north-western slopes of the Muchingas—that majestic range of bush-clad

mountains which strikes right across North-Eastern Rhodesia almost to Lake Tanganyika. By mid-day they had reached a little valley deep in the heart of the range, where the clear waters of the Nyamadzi tumbled along over many little rapids to join the sluggish Luangwa. Here were leafy trees and lofty hyphœne palms, with nuts clustering below the fan-like fronds. The elephants spent many days here enjoying the delicious shade of the trees, the crystal waters of the streams, and feeding on the pungent outer rind of the hyphœne fruits. The subject of this sketch enjoyed his sojourn in the Muchingas immensely until the severe quietude of his life was broken by the enactment of a great tragedy.

It was mid-day, and he had been sleeping under a clump of euphorbia trees with his mother and a dozen other elephants around him. His slumbers were rudely disturbed by the sharp crack of a rifle, and as the echoes of the shot vibrated through the hills he saw a great bull elephant stagger and fall only a yard or two away from him. Then he heard his mother give a scream of rage and charge madly forward. He crashed after her, and as he did so he caught a whiff of evil-smelling air, a scent which always afterwards warned him of the presence of some awful danger, just as that short, sharp sound always made him fearful and angry. Suddenly there was another crack and down fell his mother. She tore up the ground with her one long tusk, and then he saw her curl her trunk around some curious object, the like of which he had never before gazed on. With a soul-rending scream of rage she half raised herself from the ground, wet with blood from her trunk.

Then she dashed the object to earth with all her mighty force, pierced it with her tusk, and in her dying ferocity screamed and screamed again. He was terrified and bewildered, and, hearing the crashing of his consorts in the trees in front of him, he dashed after them. He could not wholly understand how this awful crisis in his life had been brought about, and yet in his rapidly developing brain he realized that he had for the first time met his eternal enemy—that puny member of creation who is named man.

Away and away the elephants marched from the valley of calamity, away to the pools of the Luangwa, where the n'jenje berries, the wild peaches, the tall rich grasses and the mahogany and kigelia trees robe the banks of the river in a riotous growth of vegetation. For long he remained here, and when the rains came he waded through the water-logged country and sometimes ventured into the gardens of the Awisa.

Occasionally a wave of suspicion would waft over him, and he would raise his trunk like a great python and scent the air for that taint which he always associated with danger, perhaps death.

There he remains to this day, moving from the slumbering river away to his favourite feeding-grounds, marching from water-hole to water-hole, tearing down the bark of trees, sometimes travelling with his great brothers and sisters, sometimes wandering through the forests alone. And when his great shadow darkens the moonlit clearings in the bush even the lion—the so-called king of beasts—snarls and slinks away. For the baby born in the Muchinga foothills has become the lord of creation.

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ELEPHANT; LUANGWA VALLEY
(Note the size of the animal's ear)

After securing two bull elephants in the Luangwa I marched towards the Muchingas, and never shall I forget the journey which brought me to the bottom of the range.

It had been a long, trying march, carried out through a day of memorable heat, memorable even in the valley of the Luangwa, where the thermometer sometimes rises to 118 degrees in the shade, and each breath of fiery wind is wafted as if from the open gates of Hell. Since daybreak we had tramped along native paths, through miniature forests, over rocky hillocks, across laggard streams. My "tenga-tengas" were foot-sore and weary, and so was I. The cruel, glaring glamour of the sun lessened, as though the heavens had at last taken pity on the scorched earth, and the more restful shades of late afternoon came to my little caravan like a draught of crystal water to one lost in a desert. We had reached a native village, a cluster of reed-thatched huts inhabited by a few score of Awisa. Away to the north a great towering wall of blue frowned down on the little settlement—the south-eastern pinnacles of the Muchinga Mountains.

I had pitched my wandering camp and lay back in the comfortable canvas of a deck chair, with my face to the rugged grandeur of the escarpment. A hundred paces away the rippling rhapsody of the Nyamadzi river, released from the rugged portals of its mountain home, fell as a murmur on the evening air. Presently the dying sun sank like a globe of furnace fire on the mountain tops, and hurled red shafts of departing glory across the western sky. The grim old buttresses of the mountains had witnessed such a scene since the beginning of things.

Sphinx-like in their solemnity, the last rose-red farewell blush of sunset seemed to kiss their colossal outlines and bathe sky and mountain top in a flare of crimson. And then the majesty of the whole thing dimmed, died, and the dismal mantle of dusk robbed the Muchingas of their glory.

While my eyes had feasted on this masterpiece of transformation my mind had mused on the eternal vigil of the mountain crests, which stood up against the sky like giant sentinels. What war and rapine they had gazed on! What ages of life's unending turmoil of tragedy and transition they had known! And they had watched it all with never a gesture; just a grim, disdainful smile. They stood on the mountain road that led from the fertile Luangwa, where the agricultural Awisa tilled their crops, to the land of the warlike Awemba, blood-loving and cruel, the terror of all this vast tract of Central Africa. They put a barrier between Mars and Ceres, and Mars had leaped their hurdles and plunged the land in crimson. For this is an African Aceldama. The chronicles of the Arab slave raiders, which were recorded in vulture-picked skeletons, slave-sticks and bleached bones from Lake Mweru to Zanzibar, hold no such awful chapters as the tale the mountain sentinels might tell. The days have not long gone by when the broad blades of the Awemba spears cried loud for quivering flesh, when blood filled the rivers, and the breasts of women withered on the thatch of many a hut.

Visions of Rider Haggard's romance, *King Solomon's Mines*, flashed before me that evening as I watched night fall on the Muchingas. Might

not that majestic range be the Suliman Berg of the African novelist's fantasy? Might not Twala, the one-eyed, the terrible, have held bloody sway in the land of barbaric romance that lay beyond? And might not Gagool, the evil witch-hag, have smelt out her luckless victims among the torture-loving Awemba? Just ere the great dark sheet of night dropped on the Muchingas silhouetted against the quickening dusk, the skull of the old Portuguese adventurer, Jose da Silvestre, seemed to peer at me from a cavern high up on the castellated crags, and Allan Quatermain, Sir Henry Curtis and Good beckoned from the serrated summits.

And well might Rider Haggard have drawn his most forceful scenes of cruelty and savage abandon from those tall, lithe heathens who have spread over much of British Central Africa from the Congo, black as the darkest hour of midnight, with hair shaved back from their foreheads and great scars seared on cheeks and chests—their tribal tattoo marks. The Awemba are true sons of the Dark and Last Continent. They have many customs and superstitions which are remarkable, but it is their love of blood and the infliction of pain and suffering that stamp them most markedly.

If the Dyaks of Borneo have earned the sobriquet of the "head hunters," the Awemba may well be named the seekers of limbs. Mutilation is but the fortune of war, revolting torture the penance for a liaison. They have revised Scripture, and instead of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," it is a tongue for a lie and an arm for a theft. It will be seen that their penal code is a severe one. I may be pardoned if

I correct myself and write "has been a severe one," for British justice and the men who administer it in the back-yards of the Empire have practically stamped out these atrocious practices.

If their sense of criminal punishment has been stern, what can one write of their devilish dealings to the vanquished in war?—eyes gouged out, lips and noses sliced away, arms and legs cut off. The technical advisers of the Inquisition might have envied their erudite cruelty.

There is, or rather was, an instrument of torture among the Awemba known as the "lamvia." After I had scaled the Muchingas I travelled through a considerable portion of the Awemba country and tried hard to secure one of these charming affairs, but without success. The "lamvia" consists of a hollowed-out sable antelope's or bullock's horn, and is fitted with a crude kind of mask and a bell. Into this the head of the unfortunate captive or offender against the laws of the Awemba was forced and his throat was cut. The blood spurted forth into the horn and rang the bell, to the immense enjoyment of the lookers-on.

Yet, despite their cruel, warlike natures, I always found the Awemba Nature's gentlemen. When I visited Luchembe's village, Luchembe, paramount chief of the Awemba south of the Chambezi River, saluted me, gave me presents of sweet potatoes, and furnished me with a guide to lead me to the great marshes of Lake Bangweolo. One cannot but shudder at their love of mutilation, but to any white man who upholds the dignity of his race among them they are as respectful as they are kindly; for they are

unsullied savages, who have not cut themselves on the ragged edges of what the modern, clever world is pleased to call civilization. In time, I suppose they will do so, unless a halt is called in the mad movement for heathen enlightenment.

The able Native Commissioners of this vast abode have put a merciful stop to those blood enactments, which must have made the Awemba "sphere of influence" a region of rapine. And the Native Commissioners are all-sufficient. They are the best missionaries for the true, primitive pagan. *Si j'étais le roi*, they should be the only media of culture I would tolerate. For the time Awembaland is pacific, and the stone sentinels on the mountain tops see only the bands of porters carrying the commerce of peace over the meandering, rocky footpaths of the Muchingas.

Still at times the embers of the fire that burns so fiercely, and that was trodden on and stamped by the iron heel of Great Britain, glow for a while, as though they would again burst into furious flame. Thus they glowed not so very long ago, and it is probable that only the influence of one man, a Government servant, who had long held the reins of office at Chinsali, smothered the smouldering heap. Teach the heathen Awemba that all men are brothers, and again the mountain sentinels may gaze with a sardonic smile on rivers that run red and paths that lead to piles of severed limbs.

A chilly breath of night wind that came sighing over the tree-tops disturbed my reverie. All around me fires burned merrily and natives laughed and chatted. To-morrow I had to climb the towering wall of rugged rock, and so I sought

my stretcher bed. The mournful howl of the hyæna wailed across the Nyamadzi like the despairing cry of an earth-bound soul, and then I fell asleep and climbed the paths to dream-land. The Muchingas still frowned down on me, and on the highest pinnacle I saw Twala the one-eyed. He bore the tribal marks of the Awemba. War was painted on him. In his left hand he held a mighty, murderous spear and I saw its broad blade quiver. He clenched both hands above him, and I looked to see what it was that he grasped so tightly in his right. It was a Bible.

Hurrah! The crest of the Muchingas at last was reached. Panting we sat down on the edge of the escarpment and looked down on the heat haze of the Luangwa, which wrapped forests and "dambos" in a quivering sheen of mist. After a short stay in M'Pika I journeyed eastwards to a rugged and practically unknown country, one of the vast tracts of Africa still in the Pleistocene Age, where the shrill whistle of the locomotive has never been heard, a region in the womb of time. This is one of those lands which have taken up a last stand for Nature, where yet no tidings of the civilized Nativity have been borne. Here is a monarchy of Solitude, a primeval principality, of which the prince is Paganism and his sceptre Savagery. Great rugged mountain ranges jeer at the petty, struggling modernity which you may see growing like a violet in a strangling tangle of lianas on the Shiré Highlands. Placid pools and rippling rivers, plains and forests, valleys and torrents proclaim their fealty to the sway of World Dawn. It is in parts of this

Stronghold of Genesis that the most ugly of the earth's surviving pachyderms, the rhinoceros, roams at will, browses at his heart's desire, and wallows in his mud baths at his most primitive majesty's pleasure.

Poor old rhinoceros! I always think there is something pathetic about you as well as something hideous and fearsome! It is as though the onward march of time had left you far, far behind—a struggling survivor of another world, a lone, solitary old animal. Between the Muchingas and the Chinicoatali Mountains there is a huge, open valley, where rhinoceroses wander in great numbers. On either side of this playground of pachyderms rugged, castellated ranges tower heavenwards. Here in the early mornings the lions roar and roar from their rocky fastnesses on the flanks of the mountains until the air seems to vibrate with the might of their voices. Along every native path, up each age-beaten track, one may see the spoor of the rhino. In every pool the mud has been churned up by the great beasts, everywhere twigs have been browsed, streams traversed by the silent army, each unit of which carries two murderous horns. Ask the members of the mixed Awemba and Awisa population which scantily people this land, and they will tell you. "chipembere" are on all sides. At night the beasts silently stalk around and around the clusters of huts; in the daytime they hide themselves in the dense forests which flank the offshoots of the mountain ranges. Roaming at will, feeding at will, drinking as they please, the life of the rhinoceros in this vast valley of the far-distant interior is one of pachydermal peace. But there comes a day when a puny

little creature on two legs arrives on murder bent, and then there is righteous indignation in the Principality of the Pleistocene.

Rhino after rhino I found in this domain of the savage. Four I shot; others I did not trouble to hunt. One I tried vainly to photograph in life, but the dense forests defeated my object, and the great, stupid, blundering beast evaded me. Often in the cold dark hours before the dawn, when the camp-fires had burned low, and silence—deep, dominating silence—pervaded all, I awoke to find a native standing by my bed and whispering, "Bwana, chipembere fika" ("Master, the rhinoceros comes). For a few moments the vast silence seemed to give the lie to the anxious tone of the "boy," and then the sharp crack of a twig, a rustling of the grass, or the heavy tread of the great feet told that a rhinoceros was passing by, and the cracking twigs were but the dullest notes of this pachydermal nocturne. There are few more memorable moments in the life of man than a few seconds such as these; particles of time fraught with the delirium of an excitement absolute and supreme. Huddled round your bed are little groups of natives, anxious, alarmed, alert; and when, presently, the sound of the monster's march dies away in the night air, the little groups talk quietly among themselves and ponder on the morrow and what it may bring forth. When the sun has thrown his cloak of tender gold o'er forest and plain you may see four men trudging through the thorn bushes, scaling stony paths on the edge of the mountain-land, pushing on with eyes bent on the ground for the tell-tale tracks, ears all a-listening for the least sound;

senses alert and strained. Here there is a clear impression of the great three-toed foot, there a branch half-browsed.

One of the four men is white and the other three are black, but until you have looked closely at the white man you would scarcely have realized that the bronzed, long-legged, thorn-torn being in the rent clothes was of European birth, so sun-tanned, ragged and filthy does he look. Swarms of awful biting insects—the tsetse fly of the Dark Continent—fasten on legs and arms and stab as though a red-hot hatpin had gone deep into the flesh. But the joy of slaying, which is bred in the bones of so many, braves the vicious bite of the tsetse, the tears of the cruel thorns, the glaring glamour and hellish heat of the sun; and, presently, there is the reward—the sight of the mighty animal standing amid the bushes; the shot, perhaps a charge, and a native gored; perhaps the white man with a few smashed ribs or a broken arm. Though the rhinoceros is the least formidable of the five really dangerous beasts of Africa, more than one has lost his life in encounters with the "borili" and the "keitloa," the two "varieties" of the "zwaart rhenoster," as adjudged or classified by the length of their horns. They are great, short-sighted, blundering animals, of keen scent and keen hearing, hideous as gargoyles, irresistible as locomotives.

The day will come when they, like all the members of the primeval world, will disappear before the mad onward rush of civilization, and the titanic pachyderm will have to fight the locomotive—as he has done literally before to-day on the Uganda Railway—and the locomotive will

win. The world will be the poorer for a true and living relic of the long ago when the hideous old monster is gone. Away in his far-distant stronghold, where the twin ranges dip down into the great valley, and where round many a camp I have eaten the questionable tit-bit of rhinoceros liver, the monster has bid defiance to the outside world. One day, I suppose, tourists from the Transvaal will be sauntering down those slopes where now elephants and rhinos, giant trees and mountain torrents reign supreme. But long may that day be withheld, and long may it be before those who have tired of the mockery of the modern world have no fastness to repair to where they may lead the life of the Stone Age with all its joys of unshackled liberty.

Here, too, roams the prowling lordly lion. Often I heard his majestic roar reverberate and echo and re-echo from one towering escarpment to another, and then the voice would die away to a great sob, and silence absolute and utter would reign supreme again. Let me try to conjure up for you some vision of a lion's life story, a brief history of animal omnipotence. Consider then the birth of Baby Leo in this far-away corner of the earth. Consider Mother Lion and her progeny.

Naturally enough she was very proud of the two little cubs. She licked them, pushed them round and round with her nose and purred over them with maternal satisfaction. Truly they were handsome little animals, and one would scarcely imagine that such soft-looking, lovable creatures could ever grow up to become the terrors of man and beast for many scores of miles round their haunts. Their home was in a

little, rocky cavern on the southern slopes of the Chinicoatali Mountains. There was little animal life in the mountains, but at the foot of the slopes a pretty little river which gathered its waters from the torrents of the range coursed leisurely along, and here eland, zebra, roan antelope, and bush-buck drank in the early morning and again at dusk. The lioness found no great difficulty, therefore, in finding meat for herself, and although the birth of the cubs and their subsequent nourishment demanded that she should be exceptionally well fed, she was seldom hungry. Sometimes she hunted alone and sometimes she was accompanied by her mate, a magnificent lion in the best years of his life, with a great, tawny mane and a voice that would make music through all the rocky fastnesses of the mountains. But he was a gentleman of uncertain habits. Sometimes he would return to the lair in the first hour of sunlight, but often he wandered away to the grassy plains by the river and fell asleep amongst the tall, dense grass bordering an ant-heap. Many weeks elapsed before the cubs accompanied their parents on their nocturnal excursions, but they soon learned to imitate the stealthy, cat-like prowl of their father and mother.

Their father had shown them how to earn a meal in a manner which had impressed them greatly. He had crept up behind a great bull eland one evening just as the noble old animal was lowering his muzzle in the water for his usual sundown fill. Suddenly the lion sprang right on to the eland's withers, and his claws dug right into his sides, and before the old bull could even dash in abject terror into the river,

the lion had fastened his teeth deep into the back of his neck, and with one savage, powerful bite had brought the great antelope down. It was all so wonderfully silent and sudden that the cubs who were crouching by their mother scarcely realized that their sire had secured several hundredweight of rich, fat meat in those momentous seconds. But there the eland lay, and a minute afterwards his great, ox-like body was being torn in pieces by the cruel claws and long, strong teeth. The first blushes of daybreak were stealing across the eastern sky before the lions decided that they had eaten their fill for one night. Seven or eight hungry jackals were patiently sitting around the carcase, on which a considerable amount of meat still remained.

Late one afternoon the two young lions awoke from their slumbers to find that their mother had deserted them; clearly she considered that they were now old enough to look after themselves. She was not mistaken, and for months the pair hunted together. Game was abundant, and they grew in strength and experience day by day. Of course the time came when they, too, found their mates, and like all the rest of creation their ties of blood kinship were weakened when they took unto themselves the cares and affections of fatherhood. In short, the brothers separated, and we shall in future have to follow the fortunes of but one of them.

The life of the larger of the two was the more eventful, and we will, therefore, see how he fared in the sterner years of his life. One morning he returned to the cave in which he and his mate had taken up their abode to find that she had presented him with two fine cubs.

But he took very little interest in his offspring —indeed he was a most undutiful parent—and a few days after the birth of the cubs he forsook her and wandered away on his own account. In a few months he had roamed nearly to Lake Mweru. Sometimes he had hunted with other wandering lions, and sometimes he had killed entirely on his own account. Several adventures had befallen him, and one certainly calls for mention, for it was really the turning-point of his career. One dark night he was prowling around on the banks of the Chambezi River with three other lions. They had hunted there for many days and the game was very wary, so an old lion suggested a little strategy. Leo Major wandered away from the river, and the lion of this little story and his two companions crouched down by its banks. Presently the old lion roared and roared until the air seemed to vibrate. A great troop of zebra heard his roars and got his wind—the old lion had carefully studied wind before he commenced roaring. They stampeded with snorts and barks of terror and rushed straight into the jaws of the three lions ambushed by the river. Our friend had pulled down a fine old stallion, and when Leo Major came down to the Chambezi and wanted to share the spoil, he keenly resented the intrusion. A terrible fight ensued, and our friend got badly bitten through a leg and the back of his neck, and was also unfortunate enough to run a sharp thorn up into the tender pad of his foot in the fracas. Several days he lay in the shade of a great rock and none came to comfort or tend him. Gradually his leg and neck wounds healed up, but the foot festered and, though ravenously

hungry, he was wholly unable to catch game. Fate enters into the lives of wild animals just as it sways the destinies of mankind; the minor incidents are productive of most momentous results. Had it not been for that evil little thorn, our feline acquaintance would in all probability have been content to remain on an antelope or a zebra diet. As it was, he limped a few miles to a native village one night, and just before dawn he stole a goat. The next night all the goats had been driven into huts, but he seized a native woman early the next morning, and the taste of human blood and flesh appealed strongly to his palate. To-day he is the terror of the Lake Mweru region. His foot has at last healed up, and he is a great, shaggy-maned animal, a confirmed man-eater, daring, cunning and resourceful, for he has never forgotten the delicious taste of his first human meal.

When the fires have burned down in the villages and his low hunting grunt breaks the silence of the African night many an Awemba moves unsteadily around his hut and seizes his spear in an agony of fear, and he may well be excused, for there is no more terrible foe in the whole wide world than a man-eating lion seeking whom he may devour.

And now away to another realm of solitude distant several days' journey to the west of the great valley, where the lions roar and the rhino pushes his ponderous way through the thorn belts. I write of the call of the swamps that surround Lakes Bangweolo and Mweru.

Every different portion of this world has its

NATIVE WOMAN; NORTHERN RHODESIA

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A FINE REED-BUCK HEAD; NORTHERN RHODESIA

peculiar fascination. The rugged grandeur of mountain ranges, the placid peace of lakes and rivers, the strenuous life of a busy city have each their very own attractions. It is perhaps difficult to imagine that the desire to return to the interminable sands of a desert could become real in civilized man, or that the monotony of the great, dreary swamps of Central Africa could ever call one back to those solitudes of disease and unending desolation. And yet there is an indefinable something in those melancholy marsh lands, a subtle fascination which bites into one's very soul, and creates a strange longing when the roar of modern life is at its loudest once again to hear the night winds sighing through the reeds of the Bangweolo and Mweru swamps. Once again one sees the treacherous sudd rising and falling like the billows of the ocean, once again one hears the mournful cries of the fisher birds as they hover over one of the backwaters of Luchya, and the realization that they are but remembrances of the past produces an insatiable desire to make them of the present.

Picture to yourself an illimitable stretch of reeds and evil-smelling pools where the water is iridescent and the fever fiends revel in their ideal haunts. As far as the eye can see there is nothing but marsh and mire. The hot, murky sky seems to blend with the all-pervading monotony of the marshes, so that there is no real sky-line, merely a blur in the distance where the rank vegetation and the stagnant pools merge with the heavens. Far away to the east are the plains which fringe the swamps, vast and dreary expanses where there is but little water, and where one may see in the heat of

noon the tantalizing vision of an inviting, crystal-pure pool shimmering in the sunshine, away on the far horizon, a mirage of Bangweolo.

These great marsh lands, upon which David Livingstone was the first white man to gaze, are by no means devoid of animal life. Right in their depths there dwells a primitive low type of people named the Wa-Unga. They are hideously ugly, and the majority of them seem to be afflicted with sleeping sickness or syphilis. Nearly every Wa-Unga it was my lot to come in contact with had some terrible affection of the eyes; they were either distorted and blood-shot or had else been put out by the Awemba, who, I believe, a few years ago, never lost an opportunity of mutilating any member of these curious people who was so unfortunate as to come into contact with the savage lords of this part of Central Africa.

Little islands in the swamps afford the Wa-Unga dry land whereon to build their huts and sow their crops. The backwaters abound with fishes, which are caught in well-woven nets, and these enter extensively into the diet of the swamp-dwellers. In places the marshes are intersected in every direction by channels cut by the Wa-Unga through the reeds. Every settlement possesses a large number of dug-outs, and where there are two or three Wa-Unga villages situated close together, the scene in the early morning, when the natives are punting innumerable fishing canoes through the maze of channels to the open water is suggestive of a savage Venice.

This is the habitat of that most handsome antelope, the black lechwe, and here too the

shy situtunga splashes through the morass at evening to feed on the grass lands which fringe the villages. Occasionally you may see his characteristic hoof-print in the mud where terra firma abuts on the marshes, but you will be fortunate if you catch a glimpse of him, for he is a consistent night feeder, and in the daytime he wanders through the dense reeds. If disturbed he will dash right into a deep pool, and will remain there with just his nostrils protruding above the water until danger is past.

This then is a region which for all time will remain a sanctuary of Nature, consecrated to barbaric solitude. No iron horse can cross those heaving sudds, no modern methods of navigation are likely to disturb the peace of the dismal waters. The black hand of pestilence has been brought down on the marshes, and the white man who enters the realm of the rank reeds can account himself fortunate if he does not contract malignant fever. There also is the dread Palpalis, the agent of transmission in that living death which is known as sleeping sickness. Creative forces have reared up great barriers to advance there, and jealously do they guard the deep waters of the twin lakes. It is this sense of the awful ability of Nature which constitutes much of the curious charm of the Central African swamps. Even the glories of the dawn and the joy of realizing that a night of discontent, when sleep has been banished from tired eyes by a myriad of insect pests, has passed cannot dispel the insistent melancholia which has taken deep root throughout that great waste. But there is fascination in the melancholy just as there is in joy. Silence and solitude

have their charms. They are more deep-seated than those associated with the noises of closely packed humanity, and no one who has watched the daybreak over the great swamps can wholly banish from his mind the incomprehensible sense of content with mournful monotony that has shrouded him in a miasma of lonely satisfaction.

PORTUGUESE GUN-BOAT ON THE ZAMBESI AT TETE

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CHAPTER VIII

NYASALAND AND THE LOWER ZAMBESI: A COLONY OF TRIBULATIONS AND AN EAST COAST GOLGOTHA

AT the end of 1909 I arrived in Fort Jameson on my way back to South Africa. It was extremely difficult to obtain any "tenga-tengas," as nearly all the natives were working in their gardens, and when I received an offer from the Government to engage thirty-seven boys proceeding to Blantyre to bring back cotton seed, I immediately decided to take myself and my trophies back by that route.

If one enters the Nyasaland Protectorate from North-Eastern Rhodesia, the grip that Mission work has obtained on the country quickly manifests itself, for at Magwero, close to the frontier, is an outpost of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Different people have different views on mission work in Africa, and I can scarcely believe that my opinions on the subject would altogether coincide with those of the Magwero Mission.

So long as England and the other great civilized countries of the world have their slum cities with their unutterable squalor and misery and poverty, all African mission stations must remain as monuments to our own heartlessness, our own criminal disregard for that old saying into which is crammed a wealth of worldly logic and kindness—charity begins at home.

I but ask you to visualize for a moment two

pictures. The one a cruel wintry night and the Thames Embankment; the other a typical Central African village basking in the warmth of God's sunshine. And to whom would you accord your charity, to whom *should* you accord your charity —the cold, miserable wretches shivering in the pallid glare of the street lamps, staring into the rain puddles, without food, without shelter, more awful still, without hope, or the well-fed, lazy and contented natives of Africa who have food and shelter and the supreme comfort of knowing that all their wants and desires are not difficult of gratification? It is unbecoming of nations that have waxed wise in worldly wisdom to talk of Higher Ideals. Look at the two pictures fairly and squarely. Disabuse your mind of all the sorry creeds of hypocrisy that are hurled at you from Tabernacles. To whom should you give—those of your own race, perhaps of your own kith and kin, who have fallen by the wayside, often through no fault of their own, or to the man with the black skin who lives in another World and has no need of your Christianity or your charity?

Do you think that the African native will be improved by the dinning of religious precepts into his ears? I know that he is not. Ascribe it to ignorance, to narrow-mindedness, to what you will, but I am convinced that the African in his raw state is a far finer character and a far happier personage than the African with a prayer-book in his right hand and the tools of murder in his left. Ask any man who has lived in uncivilized Africa or who has travelled through the byways, who makes the finer, more loyal servant, the mission boy or the raw savage straight from his elysian kraals?

Do you imagine that the native appreciates the efforts of missionaries who endeavour to teach him the dangerous ethics of the doctrine of equality? Do you imagine that such a gospel should receive our sane and reasoned endorsement? I have another picture in my mind's eye, and as it may illustrate my points far better than any long-drawn-out denunciations of missions and mission work, I shall endeavour to portray it on the canvas of this chapter, for it is a representative picture of Nyasaland—our Mission Colony.

A man stood bare-headed on one of the little islets of the Lake—bareheaded, though the sun was high in the heavens and the heat seemed to wither the very trees and scorch the stubbles of the rank grass which had survived the fury of a bush fire. There was no shade to protect the thin gray hairs, or the stern, wearied face, or the muscular chest, arms and legs. For this man was naked save for a piece of white calico wrapped round his loins. A silver crucifix hung round his bronzed neck and a pair of well-worn boots covered his feet; otherwise you might have thought he was a raw African savage, whose skin had been bleached in the scintillating rays which shot off the face of the waters.

Around him seated, legs akimbo, were a score of natives clad as he was save the boots, for they all wore calico and crucifixes. The white man was speaking to them earnestly and fervently. He pointed to the east and to the west, and then to the fire in heaven which glowed above him. The natives gazed on him with looks half-curious; awe, doubt and amazement were mingled with respect and poor appreciation. For he spoke to them of a salvation they could

not understand, of a penance they did not know and a life they could not realize. Yet when he held the cross before them they fumbled with the bootlaces and elephant hairs which secured those sacred symbols to their necks, and gazed in savage admiration on the pretty playthings the white man had given them.

The missionary, for such he was, spoke their language fluently, and presently he pronounced a blessing on them, which was met with a series of meaningless grunts, and then he turned towards a well-built little hut and let himself into his tropical manse.

His was a character of great strength—fanatic power. He had renounced the world outside as much as Charles Reade's "Hermit of Gouda" had renounced Holland; but instead of robins to feed he sowed mealies for the sick of his people, and instead of carving texts on the hard rock he gave forth Bibles and crucifixes. Years ago he had been an athlete and a boxer. He was still a member of the Church militant in the most literal sense of the term, as an old trader who a month before had rated him for his madness, insulted his teaching, and cursed his methods had cause to remember. Now, his object in life was not to act the sporting vicar in far-away England, nor to brighten the slums of great cities where words and acts of Christian charity are so sorely needed, but to convert the mind of the savage to the doctrine of the Church and to bestow his charity on them. And they needed neither his teaching nor his unselfishness.

It was seven years now since he had first set eyes on the waters of the lake. At first he had worn clothes, but when he saw ten thousand happy natives clad in calico—or in some instances

in their own black skins only—he thought they would be happier in his own raiment, so he gave it to them. Ten thousand happy natives without a religion, and he thought they would be better for Christianity, so he taught it them—or tried to.

He had been much shocked one day to learn of the killing of the forty wives of the paramount chief of the Awemba, when that estimable person's soul had left his mud-walled hut. Horror and pity had seized him at a later date when he heard of the mutilations which were the punishments in the stern moral code of that tribe. He shuddered, as you and I would shudder, when he heard that a woman had been deprived of her left breast as the penance for adultery. One day his travels brought him to a village where there was a man without eyes, lips, nose, ears or hands. He gasped in horror as you and I would gasp at this awful, pitiful object. He had stolen the chief's goats, they told him. Such knowledge, such sights girded him with further strength for his fight against heathen darkness.

He waged a crusade against such atrocities, and then the Administration stepped in and stamped out this great blot on the domain of a Christian Power. And the missionary gave these people crucifixes. Crucifixion was a new form of torture and anguish to them, but the noble mind of their pastor did not for a moment dream of the misdirection of his act.

When the far-distant Bishop of this Equatorial See heard that his hermit priest had no clothes to wear he sent him up white duck suits and a clerical gown, for Godfrey Lazembe was no fanatic. But the garments went the way of his earlier raiments. Never was there more

unselfish humiliation, and it is to be trusted that there never will be again. The well-meaning missionary of the Word in dark places not only preached that all men are equal, and that the white man is but a brother of the black, but he practised it. His whole-hearted—I had written "mania"—and in the absence of a more charitable word with a similar meaning it must stand—absorbed him so that I suppose he never for one moment thought of the mighty power of the machinery, the cogwheels of which he was oiling with such infinite care.

The inevitable wave of civilization sweeps on, and those who do not shirk the ordeal of peering into the future can see dark clouds on the distant horizon. Unless the world stands still—and it cannot do that—those clouds must some day burst upon us. We cannot escape them, but that is no reason why we should precipitate the storm.

In his true uncultured self the African native is a character in which there is much to commend. Fill his shallow brain, however, with thoughts which are altogether beyond him, teach him a doctrine, the principles of which he cannot assimilate, and he loses most, if not all, of his natural charms, and he inevitably cultivates at the same time vices which he did not practise before he gave up his calico for a pair of trousers and an umbrella.

But to return for a moment to the lonely priest. There is not much more to say of his life, and I shall therefore record his death. Like many another he gave up his life to his cause. Blackwater fever seized him one day, and in twenty-four hours he was stark and cold.

His natives buried him in a shallow pit in the bush. The same night the drums were beaten loudly, there was a big dance in the village, and much native beer was drunk, as is their custom on the decease of a great man.

A dozen miles or so from Magwero one crosses the Bua River and comes on quite a different establishment to Magwero, an outpost of the British Army instead of the Christian religion.

Modern Nyasaland has passed through many days of war, and a military force of importance is maintained in the Protectorate. Over twenty years ago the Arabs resisted the growth of British influence around the waters of Nyasa by arms and battle, and, after their advance down the lake had been stayed by a handful of Britishers and their power had been broken in Eastern Central Africa, the work of subduing one or two powerful native tribes had to be undertaken. Of these the Yaos and the Angoni (descendants of the old Zulu fighting stock which earned for Tchaka, M'Zilikazi and Lobengula the reputations of black Neros) gave most trouble, but at length their anarchy was broken, and this part of Africa was given over to the white man, the reward of years of toil and fighting and exploration. Fort Jameson now stands close to the old slaughter kraals of M'Pezeni—the great Angoni king—and to this day the capital of North-Eastern Rhodesia is commonly spoken of amongst the natives as "M'Pezeni." As for the Yaos, they have settled down to the arts of peace instead of war, and their intelligence, physique and courage make them most valuable assets of the Lake Protectorate. There are no

braver natives in Africa than the Yaos. They have their faults, of course, but a good Yao servant is a possession to be treasured as a gem of great worth.

The founding of Nyasaland was thus not achieved without the spilling of much blood, and it is deemed necessary to maintain a military force in the country, for the Nyasaland Administration not only guards its own territory, but at the time of which I write, assumed responsibility for the peace of North-Eastern Rhodesia as well. And so there are numerous forts scattered throughout the territory. Fort Manning is one of these —a military post pure and simple, with a young British officer in command. About sixty-nine miles south-east of Fort Manning lies Lilongwe, an administrative post or Boma.

Between these two places there is little of much interest to be observed. The road to Blantyre, a well-beaten native track running down its centre, the sides weed-clad, winds through Achipata villages, past rest-houses, across green "dambos," and through many small forests. Occasionally the sight of game breaks the monotony of the tramp, and I well remember swearing at two fine sable antelope bulls that I saw close to the road. One of them indeed was a magnificent creature. I had no licence to shoot in Nyasaland, and, moreover, my ammunition was finished, after my three and a half months' hunting in the Luangwa Valley and towards Lake Bangweolo, and so I had to stand and gaze in regretful admiration as the antelope bounded across the road into the bush. The sun glinted on his grand scimitar-shaped horns, thrown back nearly to his withers,

and I longed to get a sight on him, for he carried a truly magnificent head.

The country hereabouts is fairly densely populated, and the main road leads past large numbers of kraals, the majority of the inhabitants being Achipata and Achewa, whilst a few Angoni and Yao are occasionally met with.

The Nyasaland Administration takes every care of its native population, for it is, of course, not only an obligation on Great Britain to take up the white man's burden in Nyasaland, as she has done in other parts of Africa, but the population of this Central African Protectorate is great in comparison to the size of the country, and contributes a very large percentage of the revenue in the shape of hut taxes—in one recent year nearly 43 per cent. of Nyasaland's income was contributed directly by the natives. Then, too, much of the transport work of the country —particularly in Angoniland, where there are neither railways, lakes, nor navigable rivers—is done by natives. The system of native administration in vogue in the Lake Protectorate is good, although there are one or two directions in which reform might well be instituted. For instance, Native Commissioners and Assistant Native Commissioners might, one would think, be spared the ghastly task of personally superintending the hanging of murderers.

The average Englishman of good family and custom—and this type represents the average Nyasaland official—naturally thoroughly dreads such duties—and I cannot see why he should not be excused from undertaking these gruesome tasks. It is quite right that native murderers should meet the extreme penalty of the law

in the magisterial area in which the deed was committed.

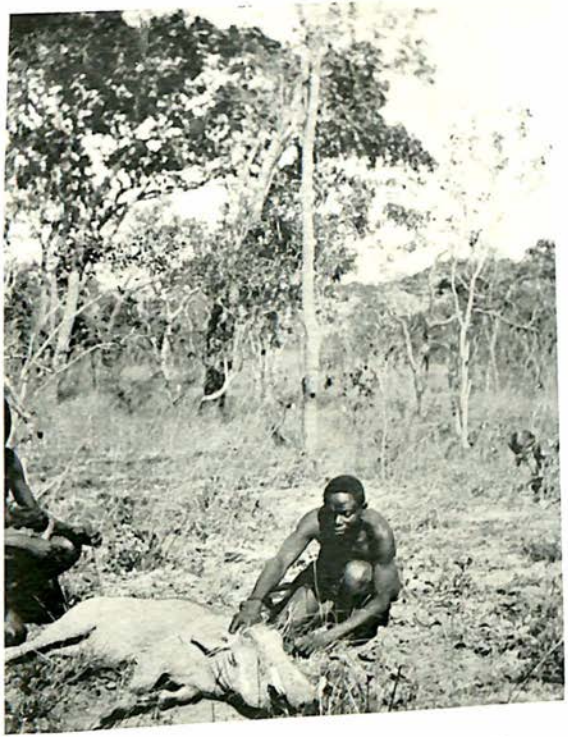
If all were sent to Zomba, the natives in a far-away district where a murder had been committed would lose sight of the murderer, but they might or might not realize what punishment had been meted out to him, and the execution would in all probability have no influence on the murderer's neighbours, and much of the significance of British law and justice would be lost on the native mind. But surely it would not be difficult to obtain the services of a professional hangman, who would visit the different gaols of the country and perform his duties, scarcely those of Native Commissioners.

Lilongwe is a prettily situated little place with the Lilongwe River, which rises in Portuguese territory and flows into Nyasa, running through the station. After leaving Lilongwe one gets some fine views of the mountains and hills of the Angoni plateau.

All the way from Lilongwe to Tetie the country west of the main road is a game reserve, and here very large numbers of elephant roam. Occasionally permission is granted to shoot one or two in the reserve, and I have been told that some little while ago no less than six were killed there in twenty minutes.

Tetie is the headquarters of the W.N.L.A.* in this part of Africa, and from here large numbers of natives are recruited for work in the mines of the Main Reef. Here one is no great distance from the Portuguese boundary, whilst the main road from Dedza to Fort Melangeni either passes through a portion of Portuguese East Africa or runs right along the border. The Dedza Boma

* Witwatersrand Native Labour Association.



A WART HOG; BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA

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ON "ULENDO"; BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA

is one of the highest stations, if not the highest station, in the whole Protectorate. It nestles at the foot of Dedza Mountain, from the top of which a good view to Lake Nyasa can be obtained at favourable times of the year, Dedza is a well-laid-out station, surrounded by plenty of trees, and it needs them, for cold winds blow over the crest of the hill on which the Boma has been built, and in winter Dedza would, I should imagine, be anything but tropical. Dedza is in the heart of Angoniland, and these fine savages, descendants of the old Zulu stock, endowed with many of the Zulu virtues, and yet, because Nyasaland is further off the trail of the cosmopolitan concession hunter, questionable trader, and other attributes of civilization than is Natal and Zululand, without many of the modern Zulu vices, are to be found around here in great numbers. The native population in the vicinity of Dedza, N'Cheu, and the mission stations around Dombole is very large, and it is not to be wondered at that the Witwatersrand and Rhodesian Native Labour Associations have designs on Angoniland.

Leaving Dedza one crosses some flat, open country to Fort Melangeni, a military post manned by Sikhs with an Indian "jemadar" in charge. As in British East Africa and Uganda, so in Nyasaland has our Indian Empire had a considerable amount to do with the foundation of our East African Colonies. The first military force in the Protectorate consisted of 200 Sikhs, and throughout the history of British Central Africa their names are honourably enscrolled. The military force proper of the Protectorate, however, now consists of a battalion of the King's African Rifles, a native force

formed by the late Colonel Edwards and General Sir William Manning, which has been tried and not found wanting in many parts of Africa.

At Dombole, a beautiful station of the Zambesi Industrial Mission Society, all kinds of fruit, coffee, and rubber are being grown. The N'Cheu Boma is situated about five miles from Dombole, and is a very prettily laid out administrative post; indeed, it is not too much to say that all the Bomas in Nyasaland—all that I saw, at any rate—are real beauty patches in a country which possesses its full share of typically grand and picturesque African scenery.

Until I had reached the Dombole mission I had walked the whole way from Salisbury to the fringe of the Bangweolo marshes, through Tete, Fort Jameson and M'Pika, and the whole of the way from this Bangweolo country to Dombole—a journey which, with the hunting tramps undertaken in different parts, involved a total distance of well over 2000 miles.

Illness, however, had rendered me so weak, and the repeated doses of medicine containing opium had made me so sleepy, that, after leaving the mission, I got my "tenga-tengas" to make a "machilla" out of a stretcher bed, and in this I was carried into Blantyre. From N'Cheu to Rivi Rivi, where the African Lakes Corporation has a tobacco plantation, is about thirteen miles, and eight miles farther on the Kapene River was reached—the only healthy-looking river to be found just before the rains in this part of the territory until one reaches the Shiré. Even the Shiré was scarcely entitled to the distinction of a river in December, when I crossed it, for the water did not reach the knees of my "machilla" men. The rains were excep-

tionally late, the rivers were all low, and water scarce all over the Protectorate. But if there was not much water in the Shiré there were plenty of mosquitoes hovering around it, and the night I spent by its banks at Matope was a bad one indeed. The next day I passed through the Lirangwe cotton and tobacco estate, and reached Blantyre the day after, only to find that I had just missed steamer connection down the river.

Blantyre, the commercial capital of the Shiré Highlands, is certainly a town, as towns go in Central and East Africa. It is chiefly noteworthy on account of its beautiful cathedral, built by the late Dr. Ruffel-Scott, and because of Mandala, the business suburb of Blantyre proper, which constitutes the headquarters of the African Lakes Corporation in Africa. At Blantyre, too, is the terminus of the Shiré Highlands railway, so that the place is one of very considerable importance.

The great problem of Nyasaland is the question of transport. In the earlier days of British Central Africa, communication with the coast was effected by means of the Shiré and Zambesi rivers. With one or two small breaks—the Murchison Cataracts near Katungas, a few miles south-east of Blantyre, being the only really formidable obstacles—communication by means of these rivers was maintained between Lake Nyasa and the Indian Ocean during the greater part of the year without difficulty. Such a method of transport had naturally much to be said for it. It was cheap, no great capital charges were involved, and the efficiency of the service was by no means bad. Of recent years, however, Lake Nyasa has sunk many feet. The Shiré is merely an overflow pipe from Nyasa,

receiving contributary streams of no great importance *en route*, the Ruo, which unites with the Shiré at Chiromo, constituting the most important of these.

That year the rains had been very late, and this, combined with the fact that the water in the tank of Nyasa had been exceptionally low, brought about entire disorganization of the river service. The Shiré Highlands railway was constructed from Chiromo to Blantyre to facilitate transport, and at a later date the railway was extended from Chiromo to Port Herald, thirty miles nearer the coast, on the Shiré River, as the water above Port Herald became so low that the steamers could not at certain times of the year reach Chiromo.

But things seem to have gone from bad to worse, and at the time of writing, the large river steamers were unable to proceed above Villa Bocage. Only the smallest boat of the B.C.A. Co.'s flotilla could proceed to N'Temia, and N'Temia must be something like nine miles from Villa Bocage. Between Port Herald and N'Temia or Villa Bocage communication is now maintained by small house-boats, and even with craft of this description drawing only a few inches of water it is a matter of great difficulty to reach Villa Bocage, the real head of perennially navigable water. It is here that the influence of the Zambesi is felt; indeed, for some miles above N'Temia the back-waters of the Zambesi are travelled on with but a very small contribution from the Shiré. Nyasaland is therefore in need of better means of communication with the coast. The present crude and costly method of combining land with railway, lake and river transport, and the expense and time involved

in reloading and transhipment in barges, house-boats, small and large stern-wheelers, puts a heavy tax on the industry of the country. Nyasaland nowhere touches the coast, but until there is direct railway communication between the south end of Lake Nyasa and Villa Bocage, or, better still, with the Indian Ocean, the Protectorate cannot be expected to give evidence of her real wealth. Chinde, too, is an unsatisfactory port—it is rapidly being swallowed up by the sea—and Quilimane, or some other place on the coast, will probably have to, some day in the near future, take upon itself the responsibilities of the commerce of much of South Central and East Africa. By the Anglo-Portuguese Convention of 1891 the Zambesi was proclaimed a neutral waterway, but Port Herald is the most southerly station of the Protectorate, and, as things are constituted in Africa at present, extension of the Shiré Highlands railway to the coast will have to be performed in the territory of a foreigner. Recently construction of a line from Beira to tap the Protectorate has been agreed on, so that improved transport conditions may be looked for in the near future.

The Shiré Highlands Railway is 114 miles long and has cost over a million sterling, or close on £10,000 per mile, a price approximating closely to that of the Uganda Railway, which is between 500 and 600 miles in length and took six millions sterling out of the pockets of British taxpayers. But the Shiré Highlands Railway was an even more difficult line to build than that which runs from Mombasa to Victoria Nyanza. All materials had to be conveyed up the rivers from the coast, and Port Herald is 210 miles from fast-disappearing Chinde. This line was

built by private enterprise, so the people of England had not to put their hands in their pockets for the benefit of a far-away colony. Perhaps no railway line in the world was constructed under greater difficulties. It is on the 3 ft. 6 in. gauge, and may be truly said to begin nowhere and end nowhere. It is just one link in a commercial chain which will have to be forged in full if we are to reap the real benefits of the Nyasaland harvest. Like the Uganda Railway, wood fuel is used, and the majority of the station-masters, engine-drivers, etc. are Indians, of whom there are large numbers in the Protectorate.

There are some pretty bits of true, typical African scenery along the Shiré Highlands line, but from a spectacular point of view it can in no wise compare with the Uganda Railway. There are no grand, snow-capped peaks like Kilimanjaro or Kenia to be viewed, no expansive views like that which one obtains from the top of the Kikuyu Escarpment across the Great Rift Valley, no wonderful zoological sights such as the Athi and Kapiti plains afford. Five miles from Blantyre the high station of Limbi is reached, where the railway headquarters and workshops are situated. Mikolongwe, Luchenza, and M'Lange Road are passed, and then the train steams into Chiromo, situated at the confluence of the Shiré and Ruo rivers in country covered with stately palms. Near Chiromo is the Elephant Marsh Reserve, which affords sanctuary to a very large number of buffaloes. Chiromo was at one time the base of the railway and a very important place—as important places go in Central Africa. Now it is given over almost entirely to banyan traders, and the climate of both this place and Port

Herald, thirty miles farther on, is certainly better suited to Asiatics than to men with white skins. Both places are veritable burning fiery furnaces during the greater part of the year. Port Herald must indeed be accounted one of the warmest places on earth. One hundred and eighteen in the shade or more has been known at this, the most southerly station of the Colony, and needless to state, officials of the Protectorate ordered to Port Herald experience some of the feelings of the Nihilist banished to Siberia. But Britain has assumed the white man's burden here, and she must not grumble if some of her sons get scorched and fever-ridden. At Chiromo the river is crossed by a bridge 420 feet long and founded on screw piles, and at Port Herald I said good-bye to the Shiré Highlands Railway, and, embarking on a little house-boat with a crew of ten boys, set off down the river.

Where there were a few inches of water, my dusky sailors pontooned with long bamboo poles, and where there was little or practically no water, they got into the bed of the Shiré and pushed and pulled the house-boat over the sands. Ere long darkness came on, and then a tremendous thunder-storm and a little rain. The air felt like molten metal, and as the brilliant lightning flashed over the troubled but shallow waters of the river, and the native villages on the banks, I began to appreciate some of the transport difficulties of Nyasaland at their true worth. Until daylight my boys pontooned and tugged, their lusty river chants making weird music in the wild night.

By dint of much punting, pulling and pushing, I reached N'Temia the next day, where I found the *Scorpion*, stern-wheeler, and the oldest

steamer on the river. Close to N'Temia the great mass of Mount Moramballa rears itself up from the low-lying bush country, and this mountain has, I was told, been viewed from the coast, although I should hardly think it possible.

It was somewhere in this country that, not so very many years ago, the warlike Massengere lived, a people who seem to have altogether disappeared from the face of the land, as more than one other tribe in this mysterious Africa has done.

At Villa Bocage I found the *Centipede*, another stern-wheeler of the British Central Africa Company, substantially larger than the *Scorpion*, and drawing twenty-two or twenty-three inches of water. An agent of the British Central Africa Company and a Portuguee constitute the white population of Villa Bocage, but a little farther down the river there is quite a little British colony—consisting of three—planting cotton for the Companhia da Zambezia on Pompona Island. It is in byways of the world like Pompona that one meets the greatest wanderers, not in the crowded thoroughfares of big cities with scientific and geographical institutions. Men who have travelled across a continent generally have a way of burying themselves somewhere in its recesses where the world knows them not. There is such a one on Pompona, a man who seems to know Africa from the south to the Masai steppes, and who told me that he had wandered from German East Africa across to Lake Chad, and then through the Congo to the Luangwa River! Down the river steamed the *Centipede* (her skipper often troubled by sandbanks and stony bottoms); on past the

confluence of the Zambesi and the Shiré, and on to Chimbwe of the Sena sugar factory.

There is much in this journey to delight the eye and interest the mind, and to one who had walked 2,200 miles, and had not lived on the fat of the land for several months past because most of the land had no fat to offer, it was a sublime luxury to have good water to drink and food to eat, and to lazily lounge in a deck-chair and watch the bush-clad land with its mountainous background glide past in the warm sunshine.

Scores of pure white rice-birds—the "Paddy birds" of India—flew past, native dug-outs pushed along the great mother stream of South-Eastern Africa, occasionally a school of hippos or a wicked-looking crocodile would rise in front, and then, hearing the swish of the stern-wheels, would sink and come up again a long way behind.

Navigating the Zambesi is indeed a fine art. There are channels and sand-spits, stony bottoms and currents, and long experience alone can pilot a steamer down such a tricky waterway. At the confluence of the Shiré and Zambesi the *Centipede* got on sand, and only after a good deal of manœuvring and pontooning did the stern-wheeler and her four attendant barges carrying cotton, tobacco, firewood, etc. clear herself and proceed to Chimbwe. In the evening a bit of a storm came up, and again the *Centipede* got on to the sand.

Lacerdonia was reached the next morning, and a little farther on the Jesuit Mission Station of Shupanga, where lie the remains of the wife of the great explorer, David Livingstone. The sugar industry, under the auspices of Messrs. Hornung & Co., has assumed very important

proportions on the Zambesi, and shortly after leaving Shupanga, Mopea, another factory, was reached. Here we met the stern-wheelers *Scott* of the African Lakes Corporation, *Hydra* of the British Central Africa Company, and the *Zambesi*, a Portuguese boat. Just at dusk a sugar company's boat passed us, the sparks from her wood fires making a pretty sight in the dim light of the great river.

The next day I had a touch of fever, occasioned, no doubt, by a foolish swim in the Zambesi the day before, a change of climate, and the crossing of the African coast fever belt. I did not, therefore, see much of the river that day, but in the afternoon had a good view of the Moramaya sugar factory. The next morning we passed the *Empress*, of the African Lakes Corporation, the largest boat on the river, and shortly afterwards sighted another stern-wheeler at the junction of the Chinde River with the Zambesi. There are in all about twenty-five steamers on the river, including a couple of Portuguese gunboats, but the greater part of the lower Zambesi flotilla is owned by the British Central Africa Company and the African Lakes Corporation.

Hot, sandy Chinde was soon reached. The place is rapidly being washed away by the sea, and when I landed there I felt that I should not care very much if the Indian Ocean devoured the place in one bound.

Many a homeward-bound passenger has gazed from the deck of an East Coast liner at the quaint little cluster of wood and iron houses built on the shifting sands of the Zambesi Delta which is called Chinde. If that passenger has been of a venturesome, wandering turn of mind,

EMBARKING PASSENGERS OFF CHINDE

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ROAN ANTELOPE: BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA

there has come a longing to see what manner of place this is which lies across the troubled swell of the bar. The ocean leviathan pitches and rolls on the heaving waters, and a few passengers are dropped unceremoniously overboard in a great wicker-work cage. They alight on a little, tossing tug-boat and a human exchange is effected. The cage rises and disgorges on the liner's decks two or three thin, sallow-faced white men, wrecks who have gone ashore on that great barrier reef of sickness which binds Central Africa.

To the interested passenger these gaunt beings lend added interest to the settlement, just visible amidst the bush of the mainland which battles yearly with river and tide, and, like Canute of old, has to admit its impotency against the powers of the supreme.

For Chinde, the Gateway of South Central Africa, is disappearing. Countless millions of the golden grains of the hot sand on which man has built his feeble edifices are each year claimed by the estuary. Where stores and bungalows stood but a brief while ago, the flotilla of the British Central Africa Company and the African Lakes Corporation now ride and bask, and the Zambesi and the Indian Ocean mingle in the dancing sunlight. It is a pretty picture seen through the spectacles of health, the variegated roofs of the township, the mangrove patches, and the tender hues of the bush all blending with river, sea, and sky, and giving to it the torpid touch of the tropics, the master-brush of creation's artist. How different does it all appear when disease has fretted away fancy, and malady has steeped one's very bones in a vindictive flight of thought against all Nature! Pass

beyond that gateway, traverse those paths which lead into the mysterious interior, come back fever-laden, weary and wasted, and Chinde seems to be the hinges on which a great portal swings, shutting out the sunlight from life, a portcullis which guards the road to delirium and death.

For this is the Golgotha of the East Coast, and the lands beyond are the Gethsemane of those to whom Africa calls. That call is only heard by certain ears, and when the invitation comes it seldom brooks a refusal.

Time speeds by, and he who has responded to the beckoning, wends his way seawards. Many a traveller returning to Chinde has smelt the salt breeze which blows across the estuary, and drawn it deep into his nostrils as the elixir of life. But it is often a draught of death. There is something fatal in that blending of the hot winds drawn from the sea and the mangrove swamps of the coast which mixes a potent philtre that has sent scores of worn wanderers to their last sleep.

There are two burial-grounds in Chinde, the new cemetery and an old graveyard. It is in the latter place of skulls that the remains of Stairs, who dared the darkness of the Congo forests with Stanley, were laid to rest. Here, too, Monteith Fotheringham, and many another pioneer and explorer have sought the sanctuary of the tomb unhonoured and unsung.

By right of endeavour and achievement such spirits are entitled to a crypt in those great piles where England buries her most revered dead. But they were men who would have scorned the limitations of the most titanic abbeys the world has ever built. And so it is that their wasted frames were buried deep in the sands

of this little East Coast port, which stands a sentinel at the entrance to the vast, and peeps out on the spangled surf of the illimitable.

Great Britain has her tenement of commerce here, just as God has His acres for the worn-out bodies of those who made that commerce possible.

A small strip of land bounded by a palisade stretches down to the river front. This is the British Concession, where all goods for and from British Central Africa are landed and stored free of duty.

One day, perhaps, Quilimane will be the metropolis of this part of Africa, and will boast of a railway station and a big port, the terminus of the extended Shiré Highlands Railway. But that can only come to pass after the patchwork on the map of Africa has been remended into a more harmonious piece of cloth. And so it is that Chinde, where the lazy Portuguese police sleep in the sandy streets, and the British trader watches with anxiety the irresistible advance of ocean tide and river wavelet, plumes itself with the mock feathers of a meagre commerce.

For twenty years a little band of officials, traders, and adventurers have held the gateway against malady and miasma, sand and sea, and that is Chinde.

Some day a ragged line of painted tin shanties will proclaim to the few who have reason to visit Timbwe island, to which Chinde clings, that here was a place where a few adventurers of commerce tried to maintain a port of entry into the heart of Africa.

God has set His seal of doom on this place. Each little wavelet has its apportioned task to do, and the day is not far distant when Chinde

will lie below golden sands and muddy ooze, as deep as Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried by the lava of Vesuvius. For Chinde has defied the inexorable laws, and a house built on the sands cannot stand.

CHAPTER IX

THE EAST COAST: A CITADEL AND A BERYL ISLET

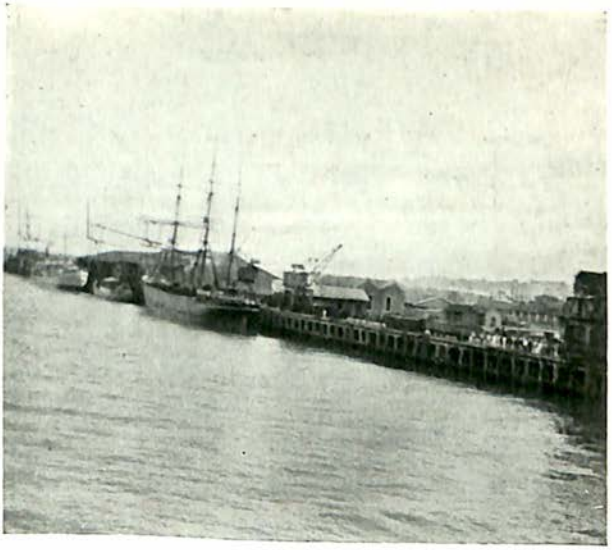
THE East Coast of Africa may be termed a seaboard of enlightenment on a continent of darkness. For centuries the great interior of the African continent was a realm of mystery and a land of the unknown. The people of ancient Egypt, the Romans, the Greeks, and the Arabs often speculated on the sources of the Nile, and sang of the grandeur of the Mountains of the Moon, but they only knew of them vaguely. Not so with the coast. The eastern seaboard of Africa was well known before the birth of Christ. All peoples, tongues and nations seem to have visited East Africa at some time or other. The history of the littoral from Cape Guardafui downwards is one of tremendous interest. It is a story of daring exploration in a savage land, of treasure-finding and fearful loss of life, of raid and rapine, conquest and defeat. It has taken far more blood to write than it took England and Spain to record the history of the Spanish Main. What loss of life was entailed in the exploitation of Southern Rhodesia by the Phœnicians or the conquest of the East Coast by the hardy old Portuguese navigators of the sixteenth century; what quantity of gold and of ivory has been won from the interior and transported to the East Coast, or what number of

unhappy slaves were done to death in the awful journey out to the sea, no one ever will know. Just as Mombasa has deserved its name of "Island of War," so does the whole East Coast merit some similar title characteristic of perpetual strife and bloody mutiny. It is hard to realize all this to-day. It has been my lot to travel up and down the East Coast of Africa a number of times, and I have never yet quite been able to realize it. Seen from the decks of a comfortable modern Union-Castle or German East African liner it all seems a land of peaceful beauty.

The old Portuguese forts at Mozambique and Mombasa still give forth the clash of arms, but they are the arms of peace rather than the arms of war, merely the rifles and bayonets of the native "askaris," or police boys, and it is seldom that they have to be used save on parade.

It is indeed difficult to imagine a more restful, sleepy, old-world port than Mozambique, once the chief stronghold of Portugal in Africa. The old cannon still look defiantly out to sea, and the thick, coral-built walls still seem to throw out a challenge: "Scale me if you dare!" But Portugal's fortunes have changed; her glory in East Africa to-day centres at Lourenço Marques and Beira, and instead of the rusty old guns which were the pride of Vasco da Gama and Barreto, there are the steam-driven cranes and the trucks on the landing wharves, present-day emblems of power.

But these modern tokens of glory, escutcheons on the shield of commerce, lack the romance of the olden days. I have not written this book as a serious disquisition on trade, although shekels have constituted the shackles that have bound so many to Africa. As was recorded in the begin-



DELAGOA BAY: THE GATEWAY OF THE TRANSVAAL

BRONSON AND THE BEIRA EXPRESS

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IN SANDY BEIRA: THE GATEWAY OF RHODESIA

ning, this is but a tale of playground facts and fancies, and if I am to continue your guide, philosopher and friend you must hurry by Lourenço Marques, which is the gateway of the Transvaal and its gold, you must not tarry long amidst the corrugated irondom of Beira, which is the harbour of Rhodesia. Our liner does not call at Chinde—Chinde is merely a mock port to which only the riff-raff of navigation journey, and if you have read aright what has already been written in this volume anent Chinde you will not regret the omission.

Speed away then to Mozambique with its Citadel of the Centuries that basks in an atmosphere of yester-year's valour. For indeed San Sebastian was a great fortress in its day. But that was very, very long ago. The straggling piles of masonry that rest on the corals of the Indian Ocean, in these strangely altered times, are little more than a name, inscribed on a faded banner that has not gone forth to battle for centuries—at the best it is a penal settlement, or a place of exile, where banished Portuguese play at soldiering and rub epauletted shoulders with black flesh. It is a sad thing to see a strong man fall and make no effort to regain his feet. It is infinitely more pathetic to read of a nation that has been content to sleep away its manhood. And in its days as vigorous and adventurous blood coursed through the veins of Portugal as ever made Greece and Rome and Spain the masters of the world.

The deeds that Cortez and Pizarro wrought for the kings of Aragon in the New World were not one whit more valorous than the discoveries and conquests of Vasco da Gama, Francisco Homem and Barreto in Africa for the glory of

God and Portugal. There are few pages of history drenched in more blood than the story of the Portuguese conquests of East Africa. Those hardy old navigators, who sailed their gorgeous cockle-shells around the Cape, did battle with wild tribes from the interior, Turkish corsairs, sanguinary Sultans, monsoons and malaria and mutiny. One can only marvel at the sum and total of what those brave spirits achieved. They well-nigh crossed Africa, and even in these advanced days the man who traverses the Last Continent has something to sing a song about.

It is well to remember all this when one visits Mozambique. Otherwise there is a natural inclination to regard the place as a town that was born asleep and has been content to doze through a life of siesta. It is true that black cannons peer out seawards, and that the colossal iron marbles which in bygone days were no doubt important factors in the calculation of power are piled by the wooden carriages. But we who have come to think in terms of Dreadnoughts and 13·5 calibres, are inclined to scoff at these old blunderbusses and their rusty cannon-balls. Yet they have played their part in the tragedy of triumph. War! red war! Mozambique, like Mombasa, knew its sound as well as any citadel on earth. For centuries this was a coast round which blood flowed in a steady current until it dyed much of the coral red and gory. And in those days the fortress of San Sebastian was the stronghold of Eastern Africa.

Autres temps, autres mœurs. Enter with me to-day the fortress of San Sebastian. Courteously, a little Portuguese soldier, clad in khaki, with a medal or two on his breast—I have been

told that every servant of the Government who is quartered in Mozambique for two years receives a medal—advances and invites you. They are a happy-go-lucky people, these Portuguese. You may take photographs or make notes, and the custodians of the gate will only smile and roll cigarettes, and ask you to come on the parapet and observe more. Inside there is a great patio, or courtyard, with sullen barrack-rooms built about it. Pigeons flutter peacefully around. You may see them alight on those old cannons, which were the emblems of Mars and the force of arms, as though San Sebastian were St. Paul's Churchyard. Palms bow gracefully to the soft ocean-borne breezes, ships of commerce lie before the cannons' mouths. It is the century of concord. White and black they shoulder arms together; and when one man drops his musket with a loud crash a pigeon will fly questioningly around the drill sergeant, and the exercise will continue.

There is something pathetic as well as comic about this unworthy masquerade in the grand old fortress of San Sebastian. A drunken marine could not defame St. Helena more. Yet there is necessity for a show of force, however pitiful it may be. Mozambique, through all the roll of years, has maintained something more than a nominal capitalship. Delagoa and Beira have sprung up in the soil of commerce, but the stunted old tree that Vasco da Gama planted for Portugal to the north is still in a sense the stalwart oak of Colonial Government. Here, at any rate, is the Portuguese East African Portsmouth, and the Colonial gaol where hope is denied to all who have not long purses. And so San Sebastian must have a garrison. Portugal sends her sons

and Africa her slaves for the "prazos"—a prazo is an administrative concession; the prazo-owner is a virtual despot—that do not get voluntary recruits, weave ropes of willingness and send them to defend the right with strands round their ankles.

But if you would know more about these methods in an age when all men are free, you must go into the interior, as I have done, and see the full majesty of Portuguese law, as I have done.

It is no good wasting French on the custodian at the gate, though he is ribboned and medalled, obviously one in authority—a centurion at the very least. He will only smile and bow, and when you drop half-a-crown into his bronzed palm for what in Dar-es-Salaam would be accounted espionage, he will give a lazy salute and drop a "Gracias, senhor."

Outside the fortress there is a little coralline city where the houses are of pale blue, pink, violescent. High, latticed windows and bad-smelling cobblestone streets, a cathedral that might be a school with a spire; the Governor's residence, cool and commanding, the Eastern Telegraph Company's quarters, where is the seat of British power; shipping agencies and shops wherein are various collections of picture postcards and the perpetual coral; these, with a Post Office and an impressive pier, with unimpressive oil-lamps, are the civic constituents of Mozambique. Out on the mill-pond of the sunlit sea, lateen-sailed boats ply a debatable trade, and little islets, round which eddies swirl, rest on the bosom of the Indian Ocean.

One of these islands was not so long ago a powder-magazine, and some ruined walls tell a tale of woe. There is a story of this Promethean

rock which I would not recount were Vasco da Gama and his gallant grandees not long since dead. The officer in charge of the arsenal—he had some title which is too long for memory to grapple with—sold various munitions of war to all and sundry; a wholly execrable act on the part of a glorified powder-monkey. To his ears there came one day dire tidings. The Governor-General was coming to weigh the powder, count the cartridges, muster the cannon-balls. Ruin and disgrace stared him in the face, so he blew up the magazine! Ingenious, if calamitous, for the Governor-General could then do nothing more than pen official regrets to Lisbon.

The tale came vividly back to me a few months ago when I leant over the rails of an East Coast liner, and watched the sun sink to rest behind the battlements of San Sebastian. There was fire in heaven, so brilliant, so glaring, that there came to me visions of the Portuguese arsenal commandant creeping, like Guy Fawkes, amid the powder-kegs with a flaming torch and a consummated devildom.

With that suddenness which is only known where palm trees flourish and the winter is a farce, the glare and glamour darkened into a glow of gorgeous gold. Black shafts of night came rushing across the burnished sky, but still where the light of the world was dipping over that mysterious mainland into which no Portuguese dare enter, a blaze of splendour shone through the riot of gloom and garish day. But now the light was of silver brilliancy so dazzling that eyes ached at the vision. An evening wind came sighing over the waters and brought a myriad of gentle wavelets drifting by. Two or three white-robed dhows sped homewards like

wildfowl that fly the rivers at dusk. A few minutes later and the stone arm of the fort was just discernible stretching out sombre and gaunt into the darkened waters. The last lingering embroidery of the sunlight hung for a moment on the spire of the cathedral, and seemed to bless its worshippers. And then it was night, and that silence which can only fall over the world's byways stifled even the lap-lap of the water babies.

Mozambique of memory! Mausoleum of mariners who dared the sea when the world was thought to be a molehill! It is a sorry shame to see you vassal at the tables of commerce, you who once were king of conquest, a city militant on a littoral of the Latin lords. *Si diis placet,* you may regain some day the proud place you possessed in the names of Eastern Africa. But it will be a fame vastly different from that which the picturesque pirates of an age that is for ever past won as yours. For this is an age in which the bank clerk is a far more important personage than the buccaneer.

It is 568 miles by sea from Mozambique to Zanzibar, a couple of days' journey. Zanzibar and its tributary of Pemba—those two beryl islets that blaze in a sapphire setting—like Mozambique, have had a momentous past. For they, too, have shared in the strife and turmoil of East Africa. But Zanzibar of to-day is a vastly different place from Mozambique where Morpheus reigns. That all-pervading Mozambique atmosphere of sweet *far niente* has been broken at the Isles of the Sultan by trade winds wafted from Kutch and Goa and the Persian Gulf. Lazier breezes blow down and

up the coast from the ports of Portugal, from Kilindini and Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam and Mogdishu—that hell of burning hovels which cries to the Indian Ocean for the cooling breath of the deep—and the gales of modern commerce drive before the Palace gates great hungry liners and cargo boats from the seaports of the North and the bays of the South. Union-Castle steamers, Deutsche Ost-Afrika galleons of Kaiserdom, coal-blackened tramps—the pirates of modern commerce—these and many other craft have known the shop of his Highness the Sultan as one worth patronizing in the bazaars of the high seas. Here, too, the liners of the Messageries Maritimes—called with some reason by seamen the "menagerie boats"—halt on their way to Madagascar. It is a curious place, this island of a Moslem, a cosmopolis of the East Coast, where Bantu and Asiatic rub shoulders in the twining, twisted streets, and squat together on the broad slabs of the market-place.

All nations, tongues and people have had some say in the moulding of this island. Greek geographers knew of it before the beginning of the Christian era. The Persians helped to found it, and the shores of East Africa and Zanzibar were visited by the Japanese and Chinese about the time that William the Conqueror was making himself Lord of England. Nearly two centuries later, Marco Polo, the globe-trotter of the Middle Ages, wrote of the people of Zanzibar: "They are all idolaters . . . and pay tribute to nobody." The Arabian, Ibne Batuta, sailed along the littoral but a few years afterwards and cruised the archipelago. He gave the lie direct to Marco Polo, for he found the people

"religious, chaste and honest." Be that as it may, Zanzibar was a place of no little account before the Portuguese doubled the Cape. And with the arrival of the Portuguese began a new era in the history of Zanzibar, a new era of blood and sack and conquest and surrender. Cabral and Francisco d'Almeida began the gory history. Arabs and sheikhs and beys and corsairs drew their fingers through the bloody trail and besmeared the island and the whole sea-coast.

In 1798 a British squadron under Commodore Blankett, which was cruising in the Eastern seas "to counteract the operations of Bonaparte, threshed up the East Coast of Africa against the north-east monsoon and a strong current," and anchored somewhere off Mtoni in ten fathoms of mud. History records that they were "hospitably received." We Britons are surely favoured! If I mistake not, the seers of Zanzibar, did they but know, would have rid Napoleon and the East of Blankett and Mears, his lieutenant!

Then the Hon. East India Co. sent the sailing ship *Ternato* to leave the dangerous calling cards of commerce on Yakuti, the Hakim or Governor. Followed other frigates of King George, and next the American eagle, having grown its Republican wings, came flying over the island like an albatross, and made Richard P. Waters American Ambassador at the Sultan's Court. Half a century later, Zanzibar figured in the treaties of Great Britain and Germany. The proud old Sultanate became a pawn in the great game of "grab" over which the Powers still linger, though all the counters have long since been cornered. One of these games of politics

was brought to a finale by what is known as the Heligoland Convention, and for the past twenty-three years the coral isles of Zanzibar and Pemba have been under the protection of that Imperial Mistress who has stumbled on dictatorship of half the world.

That in brief is the history of Zanzibar. If you would realize more fully the romance of its past, go along N'Dia Kuu, the main thoroughfare of the town, which extends from the Sultan's Palace to the new British Agency at Muanzi Moja. Here are offices of a German shipping line, the Customs House, a noble old Arab archway, the English Club, the residence of Tippoo Tib—grand old African despot of the slave-trading days—Italian and Belgian Consulates, Cingalese shops, some of which bear curiously familiar British names. Turn off into Portuguese Street and you will find yourself in a world of da Souzas. I should not like to say just how many da Souzas there are in East Africa. Zanzibar and Mombasa appear to be full of them. They all sell exotic curios, or scribble documents for an exotic Government, so that one cannot classify them according to their callings in life and gauge their numbers accordingly. You may turn down alleyways, which in benevolence only can be termed streets, and at every corner some new wonder will thrust itself on you. Glorious old carved doorways, open bazaars full of ghee and carmadon seeds, women clad in all the colours of the spectroscope, beggars and curio vendors, carriers of water, carriers of wood, merchant princes with old, crippled legs astride of fast-trotting white Zanzibar donkeys, children from Hind, fat

negresses from the interior, proud police of the Sultan with gorgeous daggers at rest in their belts.

And in the middle of it all is the American bar and the Transvaal Arms, where German and Spanish ladies greet a wayfarer with a welcome as warm as the soft clove-scented breezes that blow from off the island. There is also a reputationless sort of Japanese pagoda—a soiled page from San Toy.

And close to all this medley of commerce and cosmopolis, the stately cathedral proclaims the wide-flung strength of the Church of England. Hard by are some old Arab tombstones, monuments to the southerly advance of Islam in days when England was burning men at the stake for the sake of the Church.

Zanzibar, like all Mohammedan towns, is as full of mosques as it is of beggars, but if you have ever been in Cairo you will be vastly disappointed at the temples of Zanzibar. For the Arabs of the island and the ruling house are of the sect of the Abazis, who correspond to the early Nonconformists of our own island. It is true that the mosque at Kunazini is lit up at times by coloured lights, that the tabernacle next to the Thoria Topan House is an imposing structure, that the mosque near the Africa Hotel is resplendent in white stucco. There is also a large mosque near the Palace to which the Sultan goes on the Feasts of Id-el-Huj and Ramadan. But to compare these with any of the large tabernacles of Islam that grace the lovely city of Cairo, is to compare a Wesleyan chapel with Westminster Abbey.

Only two or three of the Zanzibar mosques

STREET SCENE IN ZANZIBAR

THE GATEWAY OF
FORT SAN SEBASTIAN, MOZAMBIQUE

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A FINE OLD ARAB DOORWAY,
ZANZIBAR

have anything approaching minarets, and the call of the muezzins lacks the intensity and music of the true Orient. This emerald isle, which for ever exudes the tender scent of cloves and the sickening stench of copra, though it has much of the life and colour and odour of the East, is, after all, an adjunct of Africa. True, the Orient has conquered it and encrimsoned Zanzibar with some of its own gorgeous colouring, but still this is an annexe of the Dark Continent. The Cassiterides were not Phœnicia because of the traders who bartered for tin. It is a curious ethnological blending of the peoples, this island city that, seen from a high outlook, is a variegated ant-heap full of innumerable little alleyways tunneling below acres of flat roofs and wooden outlooks. Like all places that bask in sunlit seas, it is a vision of dazzling whiteness and purity when seen from the ocean, but a town that you quickly realize has more than its share of filth when you tread its twisting, twining streets. Surely there must be few less perilous cities in the world in which to sit a runaway horse than Zanzibar.

Streets bolt like rabbits down into dark holes, and just when a cul-de-sac seems inevitable a little slender opening directs the way to another path in the warren. It is a sort of Hampton Court maze, but if you will bear with the twinings sufficiently long you will either arrive at the Hotel Africa or the market-place, wherein one may drink the fresh milk of the cocoanut and buy prayer mats and rusty old Arab knives at twice their worth. And if you continue the peregrination, you will probably arrive somewhere outside the Sultan's Palace, which stands

out the most dominant building on the sea-front, with its tall tower and straggling blocks of buildings connected by bridges and passages.

This group of abodes for the Sultan, the Sultana and other domestic appanages of every Moslem ruler's court, was built by Seyid Bargash between thirty and forty years ago; but in 1896 the Sultan was insolent to his Britannic mistress, and in the bombardment that worked a swift retribution, the house that Bargash built was levelled to the ground, and his Islamic Highness's Navy, by which I mean one old ship named the *Glasgow*, was sent to visit Davy Jones. A mast stands sorrowfully up from the sapphire sea. It thrusts itself on your view right in front of the very Palace gates, and seems to utter an everlasting warning to those of our scattered kingdoms who resent the matronly hand of the Great Protectress.

Ali Bin Hamud, the modern pseudo-ruler, who is a well-spoken Harrovian with a coffee-black skin, recently abdicated, for he said his health demanded such a step. The lights and bustle of London, the gaiety of Paris and the subtle splendour of modern Cairo appeal to him far more than playing at High Steward in a semi-pagan Sultanate. And who can wonder at his Highness's impatient clamouring for release? Those who have been lionized in Europe are not content to become Equatorial dormice. Yet the Government in its wisdom thinks that after the pleasure-grounds of Europe a house in a clove plantation will fascinate for all time. And so his youthful Highness has gone to regain his health—by which I presume he means to resurrect memories—and another reigns in his stead.

Unless the new Sultan blows up the British Resident or indulges in some similarly improbable act of lunacy, he cannot but go down to posterity as a good ruler, for his hands are tied by the nation that demands peace and goodwill and a fair price for Consols.

His are the "shambas" (plantations) of M'Do and Mwera; his that lovely bit of Zanzibar which is known as Bububu, to which a toy engine on toy rails puffs and snorts. His are the narrow streets and marts, the peoples, the bazaars, and the other islets that cluster round this emerald in the sapphire setting. But they are only his in name. He has much to survey but he is no monarch. The despotism of his ancestors began to totter when, one hundred and fifteen years ago, Commodore Blankett "threshed up the East Coast of Africa against the north-east monsoon and a strong current."

The cardinal ensign that flies from the flag-staff is his emblem, but, methinks, he can never gaze on it without seeing Britannic stripes of blue and white searing the red field. The doors and balconies of his palace are graven with texts from the Koran, but there must be one word in the philosophy of the book that for ever sheds the consolation of the mystic East—Kismet. It is the writing on the wall the hand of fate has carved in the great characters of the Foreign and Colonial Offices: "Thy kingdom shall be taken from thee." It is a legend that the pen of destiny is scrawling across the uttermost places of the earth. These are no mystic symbols, no hieroglyphics; the very children in the market-place can read them. The mainland has long realized their portent, and you too Zanzibar, island that clings to the ribs of Africa, have come to know

their meaning. Island where the palms bend to soft-scented breezes, where azure sky blends with azure sea—

"Stronghold that the corsairs sacked,
Island that we British lacked,
Sultanate the Powers hacked.
The legend's meant for you!"

CHAPTER X

THE EAST COAST (CONTINUED)
DAR-ES-SALAAM AND MOMBASA

AWAY in the west the sun was dipping behind those curious pryamid-shaped hills that march with the coast-line up to Cape Delgado. Bronson, an old American friend of mine, and I were leaning over the rails of the *Adolf Woermann* watching the gathering of the gloom and the last glory of the day. Said he—

"If I were an artist I would locate in Mozambique for a year, and study those coral tints and the pinks and blues and yellows of those quaint old houses."

An Oberleutnant from Swakopmund joined in the conversation.

"Ach," he ventured, "you will like Dar-es-Salaam zo much better. It is zhust like a big city in Germany."

Bronson looked at him, and I saw a merry twinkle come into his eyes.

"See here now," he remarked, "I didn't come to East Africa to view Berlin."

That was more than five years ago, and I had not then set eyes on the colony of the Kaiser. But when three days later we entered a wonderful harbour and saw before us the city of Dar-es-Salaam, with its great white, modern buildings and broad "Strassen," Bronson's rejoinder assumed a new and admirable significance.

Dar-es-Salaam is the capital of German East Africa, and I object to it because it has too much of Germany and too little of East Africa. It is the most strongly built and strongly fortified place on the coast. Modern fortresses are all very well in their proper places, but after slumbering Mozambique, or Oriental Zanzibar, the vision of a miniature Metz offends the eyesight.

What a contrast to those two quaint, old-world towns of which I have already written! What a contrast to British Mombasa, where the ghosts of the old adventurers still hover around Vasco da Gama's well, and the grand fort that Seixas de Cabreira rebuilt. One cannot help regarding Dar-es-Salaam as an upstart on this littoral of glorious antiquity. It is as though a Cincinnati lard-emperor had raised up an ugly sky-scraper in the grounds of Woburn Abbey. For it is a seaport without history and a monument to the Fatherland builded on modern foundations. True, it has an aspect of great beauty; true, it is a marvellous testimonial to Teutonic enterprise. But one does not look for twentieth-century Prussia on a seaboard where every town exudes romance, and each river-mouth washes the silt of African mystery, African fascination and African barbarity out into the ocean. There is no bar of mediæval mud to be crossed on the entrance to Dar-es-Salaam. It is all new, offensively new.

When well out at sea a stalwart square sort of lighthouse on a green coast catches the eye. One would never suspect that such a mighty place as Dar-es-Salaam could lie behind. There is nothing in view but verdure and waving palms, and this white house of warning to mariners.

The Deutsche-Ost-Afrika liner turns her bow to the lighthouse and runs straight for the shore.

It really seems a case of steamship suicide. But no ! just when a calamity appears inevitable a creek begins to take shape out of mainland jungle, and the *Adolf Woermann* drives straight into the narrow opening. The creek twists and serpentines. This entrance to Dar-es-Salaam is like a street in the warren of Zanzibar. Time after time a cul-de-sac in verdure and mud-bank looms up before the good ship's bow; time after time a twist or a turn discloses a new and narrow way into the harbour.

Presently a corner in the jumble of land- and sea-scapes is turned, and a great bush-wreathed bay with a white city built on one arc of the wreath appears. In some ways the scene recalls memories of the approach to Milosis, in Rider Haggard's romance, *Allan Quatermain*. But whereas Milosis was a frowning city, Dar-es-Salaam has all the appearance of an abode of peace.

The water that laps so gently against the shallow beach, the sandbanks that rise so evenly to the long esplanade running along the sea-front, the snow-white steeple of the church, the palms rustling with the murmur of the breeze, and, above all, the azure sky brilliant with the warmth and splendour of the sun—surely this is a fairy bay of rest.

Look into the scene a little more closely, however, and observe the *Seeadler*, a German gunboat, flying the pendant of the "Mailed Fist." Notice a miniature dockyard, troops around the landing-stage, and a few cannon on the sea-front. You cannot rob the city of its

robes of Peace, but in truth the garments cover the muscled body of War.

The first time I saw Dar-es-Salaam I did not realize that it could take on some of the martial aspects of Aden or Gibraltar. It seemed a South Sea islet on which had been builded a sort of Teutonic Shepherd's Bush Fair. It was all very thorough and all very orderly. The Governor's Residence was palatial, the Hotel Kaiserhof sumptuous, the church magnificent, and the railway station, the seaboard terminus of the M'Rogoro line, admirable.

Long-robed Swahilis mingled with the khaki-clad soldiery. Huge Germans in white drill suits and beehive helmets drank beer and mopped their brows, for it was very, very hot. In the broad, unshaded "Strassen"—if the authorities only would make them narrower and raise up avenues of palms—the stinging sunshine glanced off the white road with a merciless, blinding glare.

A ricksha took me out to where, on the edge of a spit of land, an aquarium had been built, in which a few crayfish peered stupidly through discoloured water and thick plate-glass. Outside this little maritime Zoo the foliage was luxuriant and rich. Officials' residences were scattered plentifully throughout the fairy garden—nearly the whole of Dar-es-Salaam is official.

I wended my way back to the Post Office, cool and spacious, and then to the landing-stage. The sun had given me a splitting headache and my eyes burned with the wicked glare of the streets.

After a few months in Uganda and British East Africa I returned to Dar-es-Salaam on board the *Bürgermeister*, laden with marines and

rails for the line that is to strike right into the heart of the Tanganyika country and exploit trade for the German Empire. We stayed here for several days, discharging these metal roads for the iron horse to run along, and then it was that I saw Dar-es-Salaam, capital of our Germanic rival's Colony, the borders of which march with our own dependencies of East Africa and Northern Rhodesia, in a new light.

An Italian gunboat, which had been coasting off the Juba, put into the Bay of Rest and saluted the German flag. From peaceful-looking palm groves modern cannon returned the international compliment. A Gunner Major from India and I went ashore and saw battalions of black troops, officered by Germans and drilled by German sergeants. They marched and "goose-stepped," and the ground shook with the stamp of many feet. The Gunner raised his eyebrows in a mild surprise and asked me if I was not amazed that this lazy lagoon could become so warlike. I had not associated the spirit of Sedan with the harbour of peace. And yet in reality there should have been nothing surprising about it. We all know now that one of the dreams of Berlin is a great German Empire in Africa, washed by the Atlantic on the one side and the Indian Ocean on the other. Dar-es-Salaam has been builded as a corner-stone in the Imperial conception.

We in East Africa have been content to re-garrison crazy old fortresses, to let colonization mingle with antiquity. We have peopled the highlands, and count our power in terms of occupied farms and coffee crops.

Not so Germany. She has reared up strong places on the coast and girt her Colonial policy

in chain armour. She is for ever having little campaigns with some of the seven million blacks who inhabit her East African territory, and when she has subdued them she makes soldiers of the most able, and gives them bayonets for the poisoned arrows they have surrendered. She has erected great military-operated hospitals on the coast, inaugurated flotillas, and her white population in the tropical dependency consists of military secretaries, police officers, captains of flotilla, sergeants and other Government agents.

Railways are advancing into the interior, and much of the trade that has in the past gone from Muanza and Bukoba and Shirati and the other Victoria Nyanzan ports over British lines is in future to go a more patriotic route. She has placed ships on Tanganyika and Nyasa, and an aluminium pinnace on Victoria Nyanza, and when the officers who command them look over to the shores of the Congo and Portuguese East Africa, I have no doubt they drink a silent toast to the "great day." One may observe the same spirit of preparation, the same undertone of force and armed strength in Tanga, some one hundred and fifty miles to the north of Dar-es-Salaam.

Tanga Bay, like that of Dar-es-Salaam, is very beautiful, but it is not nearly such a difficult entrance. It is the coast terminus of the Usambara Railway, another line of commerce, dedicated to the trade gods of the Fatherland.

Here, too, as at the capital, are solid edifices, officers' residences, barracks, etc., all machinery of Government. There are also hotels, stores, etc., of commendable appearance and stability. There is a black band, the members of which dispense music, and at eve, when the bay is

aglow with the lights of shipping and the purple dusk mingles with the dying sunlight, to look over the sea-front and see Tanga harbour is as fair a sight as one can wish for. Some way inland are high hills, and from these may be seen the great peak of Kilimanjaro, for ever robed in snow. On the mainland, in the vicinity of Tanga, a good deal of sisal is grown, and altogether Tanga may be reckoned a port of considerable importance.

That it is to become a place of far greater worth in the years about to come is the nightly prayer of every good German resident. It can scarcely hope to out-rival Dar-es-Salaam, for that is the headquarters of everything Imperial and ambitious in this vast territory, 384,000 square miles in extent, which Germany got through Carl Peters, certain merchants who became active on the East Coast in the 'eighties, and the Heligoland Convention. Germany paid the Sultan of Zanzibar the paltry sum of £200,000 for these mainland territories, and she has sunk millions in pursuance of a Colonial policy which she fully intends shall expand and progress.

If Germany ever gratifies her African ambitions, Dar-es-Salaam will be a possession of well-nigh dominating power, for it has been founded by an iron will and erected on basement stones of solidity, with military mortar to bind the blocks of government together. And if this East Coast possession ever does become but one littoral of a sea-to-sea Empire, there will shine a great glory on that well-built, offensively modern place called Dar-es-Salaam, which means in Arabic, the Door of Peace, and in German, the Gateway of a Warring Empire.

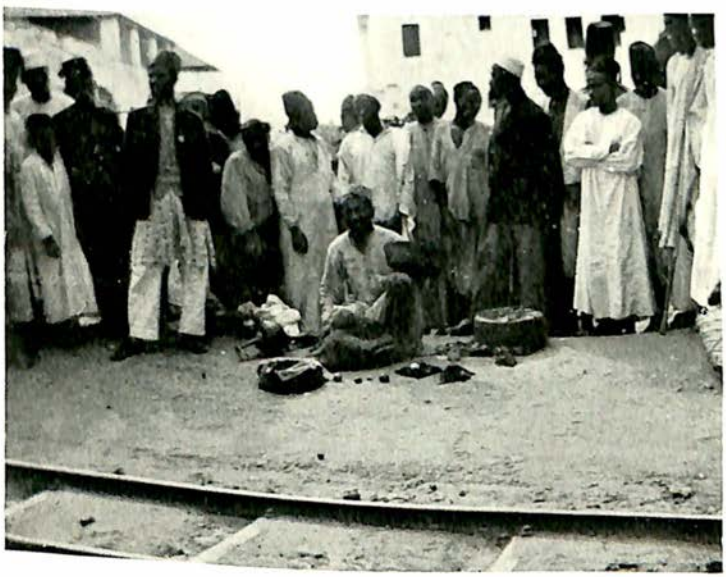
The East Coast has changed greatly since its corsair days. Places that were once accounted strongholds have become phlegmatic ports of industry; and words which were unknown in those sanguinary times now take the places of Mombasa and Mozambique, and stand for all that means strength and fortification and defiance. The native name for Mombasa bears the interpretation of "Island of War," and it is probable that no other place on earth has seen so much fighting and sack and rapine as this. Its history is even more drenched in blood than Mozambique or Zanzibar.

To-day it scarcely gives one the impression of being an East Coast Gibraltar. Seen from the ocean it is a town of bewitching loveliness. The blue sea rolls and tumbles in towards a shore all draped in tender green, and amid the foliage white bungalows peep through a floral galaxy of bougainvillea towards white-crested breakers. On the sea-front the grand old fort, now used as a prison, proclaims that this was once a port that swayed the balance of East Coast power.

Mombasa is an island separated from the mainland by a narrow channel, and linked up with the Protectorate proper by the Makupa bridge of the Uganda Railway.

Mombasa is not a port that big ships dare enter. The large liners cast anchor in the beautiful bay of Kilindini, some two or three miles from the old town. Kilindini is the starting-point of the Uganda Railway, the most wonderful line in the world. It has very rightly been termed a railway through the Pleistocene, for it meanders across great open plains, where wild animals are to be observed from the carriage

THE OLD FORT, MOMBASA



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INDIAN SNAKE CHARMER, MOMBASA

windows—wild animals not in scores, but by the countless hundred.

One day Kilindini is to possess a deep-water pier, but for the present all goods have to be discharged and cargo taken on by means of lighters, and a very slow and laborious sort of business it is. One day, too, perhaps, Kilindini will have a Customs House more worthy of the Protectorate. As it is to-day there is chaos indescribable at the landing-stage and in the Customs sheds.

An American lady globe-trotter has lost her precious Kodak and tears frantically around questioning officials and scrutinizing the loads of smiling and confused Swahili porters. A big-game hunter is having a freshly-loaded lighter emptied because he thinks a box of cartridges is under a load of potatoes. A missionary's groceries have gone astray, and are rescued just in time to prevent them returning by the home-going boat to Europe. One heaves a great sigh of relief when at last the luggage is safely out of this zone of dangerous confusion.

The town of Mombasa, as the scarlet flag of his Highness proclaims, is in the Sultan of Zanzibar's dominions, and is rented from him by the British Government. Like Cæsar's Gaul, it may be divided into three parts—the old Arab and native quarter, the central portion, which is the town proper, and the stretch of high ground facing the Indian Ocean and the surge of the rolling sea where the European residents have raised pretty bungalows. Native Mombasa extends towards the "shambas" or plantations, and is largely hidden by them. In the central portion are the Government offices, and the shops and residences of the Goanese and Indian

traders, with a fair sprinkling of Japanese, Zanzibaris and multi-coloured peoples of the East.

From Kilindini runs a tram-line characteristic of Mombasa, where it is always too warm or else too wet to walk. Along this line trollies, or "gharries," are propelled by Swahili boys clad in flowing white garments. The track undulates along past Kilindini railway station; and between the jolts and jostlings one has time to observe immense mango trees throwing a wealth of welcome shade. A police station manned by well-knit askaris rushes by. The gharry boys pant and puff and gasp about "backsheesh" between their breaths. But the ride is nearly at an end, for the cathedral, an imposing edifice, cruciform in shape and with ogee-formed dome, comes into sight, and there again beyond this house of worship, built in memory of Bishops Hannington and Parker, is the peaceful blue of the Indian Ocean and the familiar white glint of dhow sails.

Here is the heart of spectacular Mombasa. On the left are hotels and well-equipped stores. Beyond the cathedral are the public gardens all aglow with colour riot. They form a fitting crown for the statue of Sir William Mackinnon—the Rhodes of East Africa. On Saturdays a Swahili band discourses music here. Skirting the gardens are the Treasury and District Commissioner's offices, guarded by sentries who eye their bayonets with conscious pride.

Farther on are the Court House buildings and the grand old fort—relic of the romantic past. It is now used as a common gaol, this massive old citadel which once bid defiance to all the ships of murder that seemed to regard Mombasa

as a marine tavern where every crazy craft must drop in and join in a brawl of bloodshed. With its fine old inscribed gateway and great brass-studded doors, it is a treasure of antiquity that should be guarded as zealously as the Crown jewels. Beyond it, and still hugging the sea-shore, is the Mombasa Club, a place as modern as the fort is old. There you may play snooker on fast-cushioned, up-to-date tables, or learn new ideas on auction-bridge, and while away the scorching hours with "Johnnie Collinses," "Horses' Necks," or some other strangely seductive and strangely intoxicating East Coast drink.

Were the early European conquerors of Mombasa to drop in here their ears would sing with strange talk. They would listen in vain for the stern tidings of buccaneers. They would hear that young Sabreton of the K.A.R.'s was coming down to catch the *Goorkha*, minus an arm chewed up by a lion, that Lord Farmerville was selling all his cattle at the next Nankuru fair, that the Duke of Vienna had been charged by a rhino, and that Jones had ridden three winners at the Nairobi races. They would shout with joy at the sight of the old well in Vasco da Gama street, an antique brother of the desecrated fort. But the Hotel Africa, with its wonderful collection of liquors and cigarette advertisements, would be strangely unfamiliar. Farther along this street are the Mombasa Customs House, where huge stocks of massive ivory are often to be seen, and the Port landing-stage.

If you are sufficiently adventurous you may leave His Majesty's Excise, and skirting round the waters of the harbour come into Swahilidom,

composed of huts and hovels all jumbled together, with narrow paths and ditches separating the various dwellings. The smell here is not particularly pleasant, and unless you are very curious, or are going to write a book, it is likely that you will soon be gharry-bound for the Club and anticipating the joy of a long and cooling glass.

Few visitors to our East African Empire sojourn long in Mombasa; there is so much to do and so much to see in the fascinating lands that lie "up country." But if you ever have to wait for a ship in the seaport of the East African Protectorate, there is a great deal to interest and much to ponder on in this town, which has come down in the world. It is not even to-day the capital of a peace-seeking Crown Colony, for Nairobi wrested from it that distinction a few years ago. It is merely a companion of Mozambique in the misfortune of having seen the pomp and circumstance of plunder and conquest in the days that are beyond recall.

There is to my mind something infinitely sad about the East Coast of Africa. Mombasa and Mozambique are surely entitled to weep for the past, as much so as Athens or Jerusalem. One can forgive them if they look with scorn on the modern bricks of Dar-es-Salaam and the tin palaces of Nairobi. Their's is a memory saddened by a mildewed magnificence, and every new railway shed that is built in Nairobi, and every new residence that is raised to grace Dar-es-Salaam, must make their grief more poignant. But cities, like humans, must accept the decree of Fate. At even when the sun is low and the waving palms bow their heads to the windless dusk, it has seemed to me that the

Tyre and Sidon of East Africa have signified their submission through the medium of their native trees—they have bowed to the inexorable laws of civilization and gathered their ghosts within their remnant walls.

CHAPTER XI

BRITISH EAST AFRICA: TO THE NYIKA-BOUND NORTH

THE Uganda Railway has cost, in round figures, six millions sterling, and never, probably, was the expenditure of such a huge sum of money initiated with a more vague and indefinite object. One outstanding reason for the linking up of Mombasa and Lake Victoria Nyanza—and be it ever to the credit of Great Britain that it was a major reason—was the crushing of the slave trade. The necessity for maintaining an efficient means of communication with rebellious Uganda was also evident, but neither of these objectives was at all clearly outlined or appreciated. The country for some years after the Government acquired it from the company of which Sir William Mackinnon was the presiding genius was little understood. It was known to be peopled by the warlike Masai, and it was said in England by a British statesman that for every mile of rail laid a Briton would seek his grave with a Masai spear deep in his heart.

It is true that the tribes of East Africa have given us some trouble in the construction of the line. The Nandi campaign was the outcome of systematic theft of metal from the lines and telegraph wires in order to make bracelets and forge spears. But the casualty list of those

killed and mauled by wild beasts has been greater than of those speared and wounded by wild men. If you would read of the audacity, terror-striking and demoralizing, with which the king of beasts has interrupted work on the Uganda Railway, Lieut.-Col. Patterson's exciting book, *The Man-eaters of Tsavo*, may be commended to your notice. A lion has been actually known to pull a man from a railway carriage at night. Another dragged a husband from his wife's side in a tent, and after devouring the man, returned and licked up the bath water put by for the morning tub, whilst the terrified woman lay only a few feet away.

Rhino have been known to charge engines, and elephants to pull down telegraph wires. But, despite all these difficulties, inevitable in railway construction in Equatorial Africa, the Uganda railway is to-day more than paying its way. Its humanitarian object has long been achieved. Slavery is no more. From the windows of the comfortable coaches one may witness some of the most remarkable scenes of the world. The vistas of forest-clad escarpments, the plains and lakes, and the great valleys alone pay interest on the six millions expended on the railway.

There is another wonderful thing to gaze on—the great snow-capped mountains of Equatorial Africa. Leaving Mombasa at noon by the Lake Victoria Nyanza express, the traveller, if he is fortunate, may obtain a magnificent view of Kilimanjaro, 19,200 feet high, early next morning. Sometimes the view is wholly obscured, and even when the atmosphere is pure with the fresh purity of the young day, it is a little difficult to make out the towering top of the second highest peak in Africa. But

once its form has been found, and the eye has learned where Kilimanjaro ends and the higher clouds begin, the proud crest, so lofty and majestic, seems to grow and increase in grandeur and sublime beauty, and vision leaves it with a caressing and regretful farewell.

East and Central Africa are two of the very few remaining portions of the world wherein man may pursue and slay wild animals under somewhat similar conditions to those obtaining in Western Europe many hundreds of years ago, when our forefathers lived by hunting, robed themselves in skins, and recognized in "spoor" the *hors d'œuvre* of their next meal. Although the East African Protectorate is now traversed by a railway line, and can pride itself on possessing important towns, well laid-out farms and a large settler population, it can still boast of an extraordinary plenitude of great game—indeed, the big game of the East African Protectorate seems to be on the increase rather than on the decline. Passengers in the comfortable coaches of the Uganda Railway may still gaze out in wonder on enormous herds of zebra, gazelle, wildebeeste, and hartebeeste. They may see wild ostriches within a stone's-throw of the screeching locomotive, and the ungainly giraffe may be observed from nearly every train that travels from the coast to Nairobi. Sometimes, too, a lion may be seen bounding away from the paths of man, his mortal enemy, and within recent years more than one stupid, blundering old rhinoceros has defiantly charged the cow-catcher!

Such scenes naturally create in the sportsman a longing to be away in the wilds and outside of the boundaries of the game reserves which the

FALLS ON THE CHANIA RIVER BETWEEN NAIROBI AND FORT HALL

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A GROUP OF KIKUYU ON THE EMBU ROAD

Government authorities have so wisely created for the preservation of the intensely interesting fauna of this part of the Dark Continent. We were accordingly greatly pleased when one fine morning in August having got our "safari" (hunting expedition) together, we rode out of Nairobi with our faces set towards Donyo Sabuk —the great mountain mass which towers skywards to the north of Nairobi. We had with us seventy "pagazis," or porters, to carry our loads; nine Somali servants, syces, "askaris" (or native police), and a certain number of "totos" or "picannins," employed by the porters to carry their tents and blankets. All told we numbered over ninety, and great was the noise and shouting as we marched off on the Fort Hall road.

Our first shoot was at N'Durugu, nearly halfway between Nairobi and Fort Hall, the capital of the Kenya Province. Here we shot "kongoni" or Coke's hartebeeste, and impala. The former animals were exceedingly numerous there, as indeed they are over a great part of the East African Protectorate. They are ungainly-looking beasts, but, despite their awkward, lumbering gallop, they are capable of getting a very good distance between pursuer and pursued in an amazingly short space of time. We found "kongoni," in fact, so plentiful as to constitute a veritable nuisance. Time after time in East Africa, when we were stalking some more highly-prized trophy than an ugly hartebeeste head, a great herd of these animals would break cover and carry away all other game with them.

From N'Durugu we travelled along the Thika River to Fort Hall, and thence to Embu, a

prettily-situated hill station built at the eastern foot of Mount Kenia. Buffalo roam around Embu in astonishing numbers, and I secured a good bull with over 40-inch horns there.

About ninety miles to the north of Nairobi, Kenia—one of the three highest mountains of Africa—raises her snow-clad crest three miles above the level of the sea, peering through the cloud-mists across a fair-robed plain to where her sister peak of Kilimanjaro watches over the best of Germany's possessions in Africa.

In the heart of the fertile Kikuyu country, around Mount Kenia, cluster a host of tribes—peoples pastoral and agricultural, like the Masai and the Kikuyu; peoples wild and unbroken like the treacherous Suka; peoples warlike; peoples nomadic. Yet, though these have come through the ages to know the mountain as the warden of their uncultured lives, they taunt her with harbouring ghouls and fiends, forest lions, and deadly snow-sprites. She is to them at once a mysterious host of evil, and a maternal god pouring from her sides tumbling streams, and throwing to her children deep handfuls of rich black earth.

Kenia from its height of over 17,000 feet looks down upon as many Government stations as she does upon tribes of the governed. Nestling around her colossal base, hidden by her foothills, are Fort Hall, Embu, Meru, and Nyeri. Fort Hall, named after an early official of our East African Empire who laid down his life in the cause of his Queen, lies on the southern side, and is the capital of the Kenia Province. The rushing Sagana scurries below it, and away to the east, amid hillocks and verdure, the Tana wanders seawards. The road to Embu, which

lies about thirty miles to the north, crosses the Tana, of which the Wa-Meru speak in their folklore and sing in their chants. The Tana was to the Wa-Meru what the Red Sea proved to the Israelites of old. When they migrated towards the setting sun in the dim days of long ago, their legends have it, its broad waters rolled asunder and let them pass over in safety. Embu flies the lion-emblazoned flag of East Africa from a lofty hill-top. Meru is five days' march to the north, and a more strenuous march it would be difficult to conceive. Through dense plantain groves where the unruly Suka Kikuyu peer at you, seeing but unseen, and up hill and down dale, the mountain path twists and turns—a climb as arduous as the ascent of the Matterhorn—and the traveller heaves a sigh of relief when the cunningly constructed winter pagoda of the Commissioner has been gained. On the south-western slope lies Nyeri, flanked by lofty cedar trees. Kenia to the north and Kinangop to the south, weep over the beauty of this hill-station, and the tears of cloudland have robed Nyeri in a hue of green, as rich and beautiful as the verdure of an English pastureland. Farther afield are Nairobi and Rumuruti, other posts in the administrative network. When, a few months ago, I left the capital of the East African Protectorate and rode northwards, thoughts of Kenia filled my mind equally with thoughts of big game. For days I watched for her to throw off her mantle of cloud and show her snow-capped glory. Through the Fort Hall hills, across the Sagana River, I came nearer and nearer to her, and still her virgin beauty was hidden as a frightened Eastern maid hides her

charms from the prying multitude. I had seen her three years before, from the top of the Kikuyu Escarpment, when, one gloriously clear day, her smile had burst forth to the north, and the towering top of giant Kilimanjaro had pierced the heavens to the south-east, but I longed to see the northern peak close at hand. Day after day she disappointed me, till one morning at Embu, when the sky was clear and blue, she flung her majesty into the dome of azure, serene and chaste and exquisitely fair in her garment of snow, but with a suggestion of cruelty and defiance in the ragged edges of her summits.

But if Kenia is beautiful, the people who live by her grace in this part of Africa are wild, ill-featured savages. As yet they are scarcely subjected to British rule. Indeed only a few months ago they fired poisoned arrows at a District Commissioner who had gone his administrative way among them. The accompanying photograph of Mutua, chief of one of the most unruly factions, I took at a village where trouble at one time seemed imminent over a paltry question of firewood. But after a display of firmness the old villain exercised all his powers to secure peace, and eventually he got a few cents for his trouble instead of the bullet which perhaps otherwise would have been his reward.

By the Suka Kikuyu, Kenia is called Kilimara, a word which, very liberally translated, means "deceptive mountain." The old chief, Mutua, of the khaki helmet and cheap rug, explained that the great hill was so named because it seemed to lie close at hand, yet when you set out to reach its rugged masses it appeared to retreat farther and farther into its cloudland fastnesses.

THE AUTHOR AND A BUFFALO NEAR EMBU

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MUTUWA AND HIS TRUCULENT HEADMEN

And so it is. Kenia has an enormous base. Its foothills extend for many miles around its snow-sheathed pinnacle—sentinels, as it were, posted to protect the serene majesty of this Queen of peaks. Over these rugged slopes the path to Meru twists and turns, across tumbling streams, over little wooden bridges, across mountain tops, through bush-clad valleys. Sometimes your pony's ears prick themselves to the rising sun, sometimes to the Nyika-bound North, sometimes to cloud-wrapped Kenia. When the air is clear and cool and crisp, the icy summit stands out so boldly against the blue of the equatorial sky, and the rugged rocks are so well defined that it seems but a few hours' march to the snowline. But when the swirling, sombre morning mists wrap her in a shroud she looks far, far distant. Even the foothills make the heart feel faint, and the pony's strides seem slow and halting as the measured notes of a funeral march.

Some days, when hunting on the Guaso Nyiro, I would look southwards, and there far up in the higher heavens the snowy summit pierced the dome of the sullen sky. At times a ray of golden light would fall on the proud pinnacle and cover its snow raiment with a scintillating glory, and the heavens would burn with the reflected beauty of this exquisite "Lady of the Snows." I grew to look for Kenia, and when her snow face was hidden I felt as though some momentous friend had vanished. On the Nyeri road I took my last look at her. The snow crags appeared more steep and forbidding than they had seemed from the Embu-Meru side. But if the beauty of the mountain was tempered by an aspect of rugged defiance, the queen-like grace

of Kenia was not one whit the less bewitching. In the clear, cold morning air her topmost crags looked like icebergs in a celestial sea, and I said good-bye to her with humble regret.

Meru is but an infant among the administrative posts of our East African Empire—one of the youngest of the establishments of law and order and justice. Nevertheless it has quickly borne the blossom of the great tree of protective government, the tree which has spread its giant roots westwards to the floral feet of colossal Ruwenzori, northwards to the Abyssinian frontier, southwards to the forests of the Sotik. Proudly the lion-emblazoned flag bends to the cold winds that blow over this highland Boma, 5,300 feet above the sea. Five years ago the seed of government was planted here. The bush was cleared, clusters of huts quickly became finished "askari" lines, Government offices proclaimed the peaceful conquest of the mud-stained Meru. To-day one sees a lovely sward almost as emerald green as an English tennis-lawn, a log-built pagoda, the residence of the District Commissioner, all surrounded by flower-beds, all abloom with the pinks and whites of carnations. Jombani Mountain frowns down on it all, as though this stern old guardian of Meruland resented the carnations in the rightful home of the plantain groves, and the British flag where might was right and a long, cruel spear blade the emblem of rule. Jombani and M'Wimbi are two mountain masses which overlook the Meru country, and have watched ages of barbarism roll by in the process of the suns, and now look suspiciously at the beginnings of a new epoch and a new drama in the strange old playhouse of life wherein the dramatis

personæ are Government officials, big-game enthusiasts, long-bearded Italian missionaries, men from a land where rouge and face powder are used instead of clay and mud and evil-smelling grease. Meru is in the centre of a hill country. In the forests herds of elephants roam and strip and feed. But there are few great bulls left in the troops. Time was when the early officials could shoot their tuskers before breakfast. Here the Roosevelt expedition halted for a while and five or six elephants fell to their rifles.

The Wa-Meru are an offshoot of the great Kikuyu tribe. They can boast of a large proportion of finely-built men, some of whom are really handsome, despite their endeavours to render themselves hideous by means of clay and grease rubbed into their faces and often worked into a grotesque patchwork. Many of their womenfolk, too, are of fine physique and appearance, although the male members of the community seem to have monopolized the greater share when good looks and healthy physique were originally served out.

Their "El-moran," or young warriors, are, as a whole, a fine body of men, agile and well knitted together. They are athletes of no mean ability, and are particularly proficient in the art of wrestling. They mat and plait the hair, and rub grease and mud into the knotted plaits. Armed with long, keen-bladed spears and murderous-looking swords, they have proved themselves foes of no mean mettle on more than one occasion. When Meru was first established as an administrative Boma, the countryside ran blood because of "nguos," or vendettas, sworn by the El-moran. A whole "rika," or clan,

would take their most solemn and sacred oaths to eat no food, cohabit with none of their womenkind, sleep beneath the sheltering thatch of no hut until each had killed his man. Their daub and clay they washed off, and besmeared themselves with ashes. Cow's hoofs they hung round their ears. They made the forest their lairs, and the bush was alive with soft, mysterious whisperings. They would pick their man, and a deep, cruel spear-wound or a jagged cut from a barbed arrow would break their self-imposed fast. Such was the Meru "nguo."

From Meru we marched northwards along the Guaso Marra, and on September 6th we pitched camp on the banks of the Guaso Nyiro river.

CHAPTER XII

BRITISH EAST AFRICA (CONTINUED): TOWARDS THE LORIAN

THE northern Guaso Nyiro river certainly may be accounted one of the finest tracts of big-game country in Africa. To me it ranks equally with the valley of the great Luangwa, that burning rift in the surface of North-Eastern Rhodesia which cuts through Africa from Lake Tanganyika to the Zambesi. These are, indeed, great natural "zoos"—menageries where mountains and forests replace unsightly cages. The rugged mass of Laishamunye that frowns down on the Guaso Nyiro from the north indeed might well have been Ararat, on which Noah's zoological houseboat came to rest, and where the animals trooped out exultant—and presumably hungry.

Grand old Guaso Nyiro of the far-distant North! As I write I can see it meandering among green oases, sweeping round sun-scorched tongues of arid desert, coursing beneath great, rocky buttresses, or flowing peacefully to the east to lose itself in the Lorian swamp. Memory brings to my ears the music of the wind among the palms on its banks. Visions of oryx and zebra in herds to be numbered by the hundred, of the wily gerenuk wending his cautious way through the bush-belts, of the giant giraffe and the ugly rhino—these flit before me. Here, indeed, are the wilds—the land of life unfettered—and the

man who has sojourned awhile in their midst must have a soul that is dead if he cannot feel their grip strong upon him long after he has returned to the hollow contentment of an easy-chair and the morning newspaper.

The life of the late Arthur Neumann typifies the spirit of which I write better, perhaps, than any panegyric that might be written round the solitudes of the vast interior. Neumann was at one time a Cape civil servant; but he longed for a life that the Colony could no longer give him, and so he migrated to Mombasa in the days of our East African Empire's birth. Throughout the length and breadth of the Protectorate the name of Neumann is known. He was a magnificent shot, and he earned for himself the sobriquets of "Nyama Yangu" and "Resasa Moja." The former means "My meat." It is said by the natives that this was Neumann's pet expression when some grand specimen of African fauna was pointed out to him. "Resasa Moja" may be interpreted as "One cartridge." Those who have hunted big game will appreciate these testimonies to his marksmanship. Neumann was a hunter who seldom missed, and the name of a man who invariably brings down his animal with one shot is written as large in native history as Napoleon's is in the records of more civilized peoples. The Wa-Meru and the Samburu chant of Neumann's prowess in their songs. In the days when the Guaso Nyiro was a no-man's land he made all the vast tract from Kenia to Lake Rudolph and Marsabit his own hunting-grounds. It is a tragedy of relentless fate that this colossus amongst African Nimrods died by his own hand in the great fog-ridden city of London.

Neumann's old camps are to be found scattered

BUFFALO BULL; NORTHERN GUASO NYIRO RIVER

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MY BEST GERENUK

all over East Africa; but the most noted is that known as Kampi ya Nyama Yangu, situated on the banks of the northern Guaso Nyiro, and close to its junction with the Guaso Marra. I have many vivid and exciting recollections of the camp, with its sandy soil and great, kindly trees. Meru and its hospitable District Commissioner, Mr. E. B. Horne, we had left six days before the "safari" camped at Neumann's old Boma, and no one was sorry to reach it after the hard tramp over the jagged, lava-strewn desert that extends almost from the Jombani range to the Guaso.

On the march my keen-eyed Somali gun-bearer sighted two rhino one morning. Not since I had been hunting in the Chinicoatali valley of North-Eastern Rhodesia had I seen these curious animals, so I was rather elated at the prospect of again having a little excitement with them. They are extremely bad-tempered, aggressive beasts, but very short-sighted, and as the wind was right, Elmi and I walked up to within sixty or seventy yards of this pair without any attempt at concealment. We saw that their horns were short, and I decided not to shoot them. I elected, however, to have an essay at animal photography, an attempt which nearly had an unpleasant ending. The beasts were asleep, so I crouched up to them, kodak in hand, until within about forty yards of their slumbering uglinesses. Elmi stood behind me with my ·375 rifle, ready for emergencies. I took one photo of the pair, and then Elmi gave a shrill whistle. Instantly two hideous heads went up and two pairs of sharp horns raised themselves in the air. The rhino began to amble suspiciously from side to side, and I managed to get another snapshot. I then told Elmi to whistle again. He did; and

the two rhino turned like a pair of polo ponies and launched themselves upon us. I knew Elmi could be trusted, so I pointed the lens at the leader and squeezed the bulb. Photographing two rhino run mad is not pleasant work if you are standing in their track; however, as soon as I had clicked the shutter I jumped behind Elmi, who had dropped on one knee and was just about to pull the trigger. There was not time for me to seize the rifle. No sooner had I realized this, as in the flash of a second, than the ·375 cracked out sharp and clear. I saw the leading animal, now only a few yards from us, his little, evil pig eyes the very incarnation of a devilish fury, halt for a fraction of a moment as Elmi's bullet hit him full on the base of the horn. For but a quarter of a second he seemed stunned; the next instant, snorting loudly, he wheeled to the left, a model of pachydermal indignation. I had wondered what course of action the second rhino would pursue, so I hastily grabbed the gun from Elmi and rammed another cartridge in the breech; but the wheeler of this wrathful tandem had gone the way of his or her mate. Over the sandy-soiled Nyika (desert) the pair were rushing, temper and terror curiously intermingled. I heaved a little sigh of relief, but Elmi merely shook his head, scowled at them, and, breaking for a moment into Swahili, described them as "M'Baya sana!" (very bad!). He told me that on one occasion a rhino had ripped his khaki shirt open, so Elmi was entitled to bear the species a certain amount of animosity. Unfortunately the snapshots were disappointing. The camera was only quarter-plate size, and I fear my focus was all wrong.

Game was very abundant along the path from

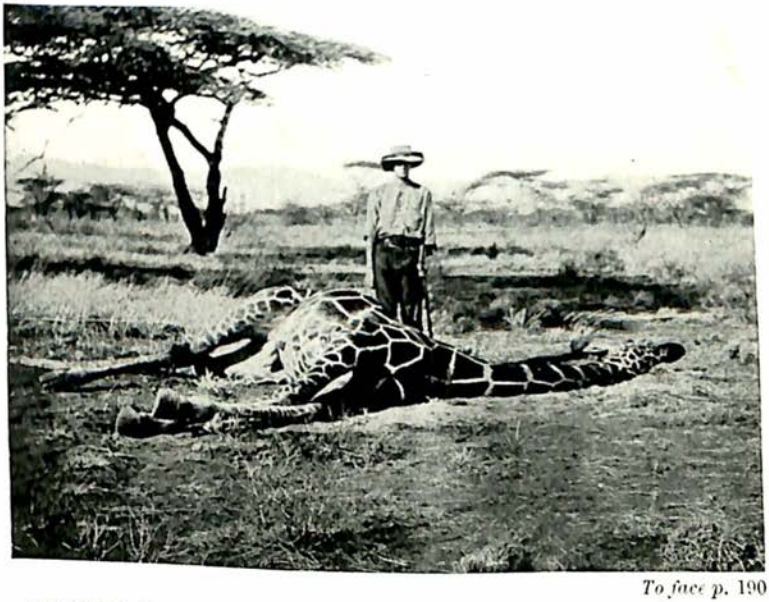
Meru to Neumann's old camp, and I got a 27-inch impala, an oryx, and a couple of Grant's gazelle on the journey to the river. All around Kampi ya Nyama Yangu giraffe, rhinoceroses, oryx, water-buck, gerenuk, and impala literally swarmed. I had particularly fine sport one day, for in the morning I bagged an oryx, and a few minutes afterwards espied a solitary old rhino wending his way through the thorn bushes. He seemed quite unaware of my presence, so I walked quickly and noiselessly towards him, but well away to his right in order to get broadside on and take the neck shot. Rhino have huge spinal columns, and a well-placed bullet that smashes this ends their careers without further trouble. When I had reached the point I desired I sat down, steadied the rifle on my knee, and fired. The bullet hit at the junction of the neck and shoulder, and I saw friend rhino change his direction and walk steadily and deliberately towards me. There is no accounting for the ways of wild beasts. This rhino did not charge in a blind, mad fit of fury as rhino generally do: he just walked forward with a calmness as disconcerting as it was curious. I had implicit trust in my rifle, so I just sat my ground, ejected the cartridge, and tried to ram another in the breech. But try as I might the shell would not go home. I had put a new magazine in the rifle that morning, foolishly imagining that it was all right, when as a matter of fact it was all wrong. The rhino kept slowly advancing. Frantically I renewed my efforts to get another cartridge in the breech, but without avail. By this time the rhino was so close that retreat seemed out of the question, and I began to wonder what rhinoceros horns would feel like in contact with

my ribs. And then Elmi, who was carrying an old Snider, let off his blunderbuss with a truly deafening crack and a haze of smoke. I imagine that the rhino received the leaden bullet, or else got a very severe fright, for he gave a loud snort and dashed past me into the bush. Elmi in attempting to reload the Snider let the hammer fall, and a bullet went singing past my head. In disgust he gave the fearsome weapon to a "pagazi," or porter, and off we went on the spoor, Elmi unarmed.

I changed my magazine, wound the rifle sling around my arm, and anticipated a charge. But there was very little blood spoor, and we soon got in amongst some dense bushes growing on sandy soil where rhinoceroses appeared to have walked by the score. There was a perfect maze of tracks. Elmi followed along the freshest. A few minutes elapsed, and suddenly I saw him stop dead. A low hiss, a snort, and a scuffle, and up jumped another rhino from amongst the bushes where the beast had been asleep. She gambolled away at an ugly shuffling trot for a few yards, when I hit her just behind the shoulder. This checked her career for a moment, and I followed it up with three or four more shots, one of which must have found the brain, and suddenly she rolled over and breathed her last. I sent a messenger back to camp to get porters to carry in the meat and trophies. Meanwhile I ate a frugal lunch under the sorry shade of a thorn bush, whilst the sun glared down on the great carcase and myriads of flies buzzed around it. In the afternoon the porters arrived, and I was by no means sorry to move off to sweeter-smelling pastures.

Just before dusk, whilst stalking a gerenuk

ON GUARD: KIKUYU EL MORAN



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RETICULATED GIRAFFE; NORTHERN GUASO NYIRO RIVER

(Waller's gazelle), Elmi sighted a fine bull giraffe feeding on the topmost branches of a giant acacia tree. There was little cover, and I had therefore to take a long shot—about 230 yards. By a great piece of luck for me and ill-fortune for the giraffe, my first bullet smashed his shoulder. It was a wonderful sight to see this great animal, standing about 17 feet 4 inches high, sway and topple to the ground. I was overjoyed at my good fortune, and yet as the magnificent creature fell and I realized that the murderous little bullet had done its work, I felt a pang of pity and remorse. It was indeed a study in destructive mania—such a scene as the Plutonic gods must shudder over when they have demolished a fair city with one quake of the earth.

The giraffes of northern British East Africa are of the reticulated variety. White markings form a network on a reddish-liver-coloured background, in contradistinction to the sporadic dark brown blotches on a lighter-coloured skin in the southern varieties.

As the red globe of the dying sun sank over the western tree-tops that evening I saw half-a-dozen giraffes, no doubt companions of my fallen quarry, gallop off with ungainly strides into the gloaming. The fiery sheen of the sun seemed to swathe them in a crimson forest of flame. Tails swishing, they ambled away, necks and bodies swaying like grotesque rocking-horses. They raised a cloud of desert dust and sand, and trees and night quickly swallowed them up.

Close to the spot where I shot the bull I saw no less than thirty-six giraffes two days afterwards. It was a wonderful sight—a scene which can scarcely survive this generation of progress and reclamation of the world's wastes and deserts.

It may here be of interest to remark, that the giraffe is the only one of the great quadrupeds of Africa that is absolutely voiceless. I have never heard one make any sound whatever, and they are, I believe, quite incapable of doing so. Could they speak they would, I imagine, hurl well-chosen and well-merited invectives on the puny mortals who take glory in shooting death-dealing bits of nickel into their colossal patchwork hides.

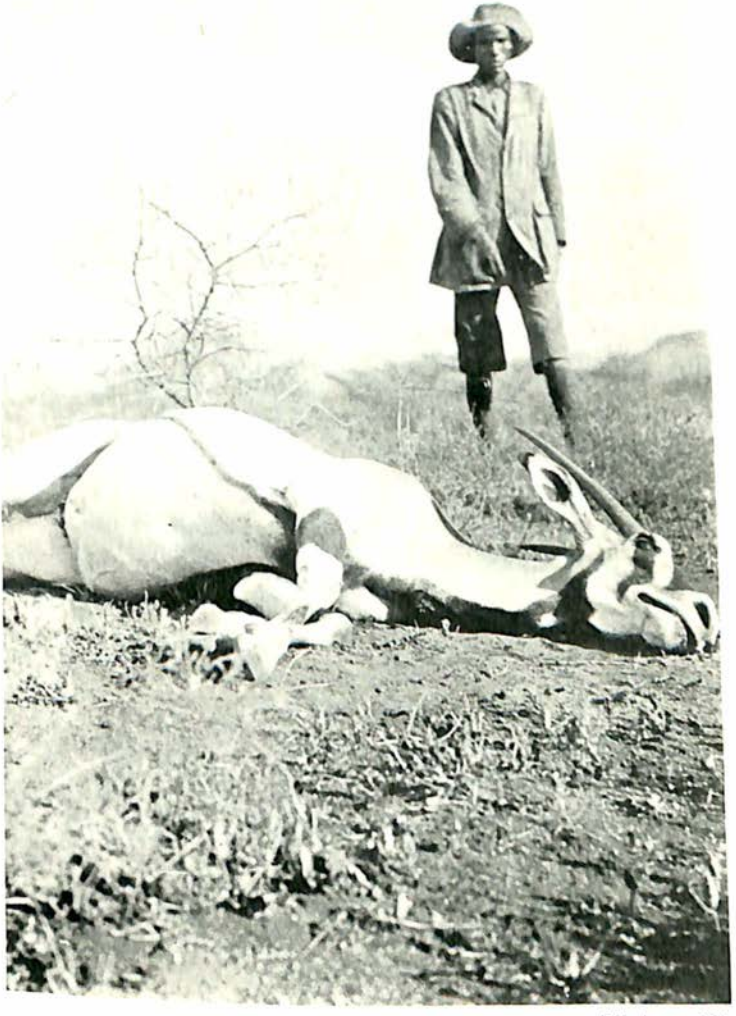
A few miles from Kampi ya Nyama Yangu is a little fort, surely one of the most desolate of all the defences of the Empire. Some day, if the unruly peoples of the North break through the all-insufficient barriers of Moyali and Marsabit, this cluster of huts, hemmed in by barbed wire, and with one or two black "askaris" (police) as custodians, may play a minor part in Colonial tragedy, but for the present it is more of a store and half-way house between Meru and Marsabit than a Lilliputian Gibraltar. It is commonly known as "Archer's Post," because Mr. Geoffrey Archer, the District Commissioner at Marsabit, built it. Around here Grant's gazelles were very numerous, and the morning we passed the post I strayed off the path and secured a very good head of the species "Notata."

Wandering down the river, we one morning met three or four Somalis tending camels. They informed Elmi that lions had prowled around them all night, and that they had just seen a fine buffalo bull enter some sandy, bush-covered ground away to the north. Elmi quickly picked up the buffalo spoor, and before many minutes had elapsed I had the great beast wounded. He galloped off; but we soon came up with him again, and after missing him badly with the ·375

I brought him down with a couple of 480-grain bullets in the lungs; and although at one time he looked like charging, I secured a very fine 44½-inch head of a solitary old bull without much difficulty. Camp was pitched right by the Guaso and directly opposite a little ford to the south bank. A few miles to the north a great, rugged mountain known as Laishamunye —the haunt of countless vultures—frowned down on us. Other igneous masses, dark and forbidding, with serrated brows, towered up from the semi-desert land, and far away to the south the snows of Kenia were visible in the clear morning atmosphere. Along the banks of the Guaso palms enlivened the view; but away from the river the picture of lava rocks, desert sand, and thorn scrub, all shimmering in the haze of merciless heat, was sordid and dreary. To the south of the river immense forests spread over the landscape and hid much of its ugliness. Along the fringes of this forest-land the full wealth of East African fauna was to be seen. One day I watched no less than sixty buffalo, the majority of them bulls, standing on the edge of the belt of trees and just above a little salt-pan. This pan attracted enormous herds of wild animals—giraffe, rhino, buffalo, oryx, Grant's gazelle, Grevy's zebra, impala—and, of course, with such an abundance of game, lions were there in large numbers. In the early morning the full majesty of a leonine concert would reverberate and echo until the rocky mountain masses seemed alive with the most awe-inspiring music that human ears can listen to.

A kill having been laid at the salt-pan one night, we crossed over to the south bank of the river early next morning, but unfortunately

too late to find the lions which had been there. However, the Somalis soon picked up fresh spoor, and the clever hunter-boys waxed eager and excited. The Somalis are brave and fearless to a degree—at least the great majority of them are—and are also highly intelligent. Were it not for their excitability they would make absolutely ideal "shikaris." We were following in the track of a number of lions; spooring was easy, and we marched along at a good pace. At last, while approaching a tree-clad mass of rocks, I heard a low grunt. We halted for a moment, and then Cabara, frantic with the passion of the hunt, rushed up the side of the little hillock. We followed, and I saw tan-coloured objects moving between the bushes. The Somalis yelled "Shoot! shoot!" Foolishly I allowed myself to be hurried by their yells, and fired two shots in quick succession. To my intense disgust both were clean misses! The next instant a magnificent black-maned lion burst cover and dashed away before I could get my rifle-sight on him. Then for a moment the bush appeared to be literally alive with lions. Great yellow hound-shaped forms growled and snarled and bolted in all directions. We had walked almost into a large slumbering family of Kings and Queens of beasts, attended by a regular nursery of Princes and Princesses. I singled out what I took to be a fair-sized lioness, and had the satisfaction of hearing my bullet get home. A wicked snarl followed, and the animal dashed away. Elmi seized my arm and implored me to shoot, saying I had wounded a lioness and she was about to charge. I could hear the angry growls and snarls, but strain my eyes as I would I could not see the animal.



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ELMI AND ORYX, BEISA; NORTHERN GUASO NYIRO RIVER

Elmi increased his frenzied supplications. I felt almost on the point of apologizing to him for my defective vision under such uncomfortable circumstances when at last I made out the shape of the brute, half-concealed behind a broken tree-trunk. I lost no time in firing again, for the position looked nasty, and I momentarily expected the other lions to join in. The bullet hit with a telling "vup." I followed it up with another. There was a final ferocious grunt, and then the tawny mass lay quite still.

We dashed on in the direction taken by the rest of the troop. I would almost have given my right arm for another sight of that great, black-maned lion. But it was not to be. The ground was rough and stony, the spoor was exceedingly difficult to follow, and the troop had made off at a great pace. Accordingly we elected to return to the dead animal before the ghoulish vultures commenced an impudent feast. I was bitterly disappointed to find that my trophy was a young lion, little more than half-grown, instead of a full-grown lioness as Elmi and I had both thought. Yellow lion-flies were buzzing around the carcase, so we quickly skinned it and returned to camp.

What most impressed me in that disappointing hunt was my inability to see the wounded animal, although looking straight at it. The tawny colour of the skin blended so harmoniously with rocks and stunted yellow-leaved shrubs, that only a highly-trained eye such as Elmi's could immediately distinguish between the lion and its surroundings. Never had Nature's law of protective environment been brought home to me in such a remarkable manner.

One afternoon I wandered east along the Guaso, and sighted a fine herd of oryx feeding out in the open, amidst some thorny aloes on the sun-baked, sultry desert. There was one particularly fine head amongst them, and after a long, tiring stalk, I got in a fairly long shot and saw the oryx go off wounded. I followed him, and my next bullet smashed his shoulder. He lay quite still, but when Elmi and I approached him he thrust at us most viciously, and the long, thin, sharp-pointed horns, over thirty inches in length, cut the air like scimitars. Elmi on one occasion sustained a serious injury to his thigh through rushing in too hurriedly on a wounded oryx ("origis," he used to call them), and he was very prudent in approaching these creatures afterwards. "They are werry, werry bad!" he would say; and indeed, unless it be the roan or the sable, I know of no other antelope that shows fight so readily and effectively as the *Oryx beisa.*

Later I shot a dik-dik, a pretty little buck but little bigger than a hare. There were thousands of these diminutive animals to be seen amongst the broken lava-rocks a little way from the banks of the Guaso. They appear to have habits somewhat akin to those of the klip-springer, and have a very similar "hedgehog" coat. Elmi had just picked up the dik-dik when I heard a loud snort, and a rhino dashed out of the bush. I hastily grabbed my rifle, but the great beast stared stupidly at us for a few seconds and then departed into the thorn-belt. I heaved a sigh of thankfulness, as he, like the majority of the Guaso Nyiro rhino, had very short horns, and I had no wish to shoot him.

I had great luck that evening, for while

returning to camp Elmi saw a leopard stealthily creeping cat-like among the rocks. He had not seen us, so we crept very quietly up to his feline lordship. Presently he lay down and only the back of his head was visible above the boulders. Resting my rifle on Elmi's shoulder, I took a careful sight. Bang! and the leopard turned and dashed straight up a tall tree about sixty or seventy yards from us. As he dashed past, Elmi in his excitement fired at him with a charge of buckshot. In the tree he presented a much easier mark. He was growling and snarling most ferociously, but I cut his bad language short with a bullet that dropped him. He came to the ground with a thud, and lay at the foot of the tree scowling fight at us. I have a great respect for leopards, so I let him have another bullet, and that finished his career. A porter carried the carcase back to camp with great difficulty, and next morning the beast was skinned, and the "safari" moved off up the river again towards Kampi ya Nyama Yangu. On the way I brought down a fine gerenuk ram. The Waller's gazelle (*Lithocranius walleri*), or "gerenuk," as it is called by the Somalis, although resembling the true gazelles in face-markings, is entitled almost to constitute a genus unto himself, so different is this curious animal to the Grant's, Thomson's and Peter's gazelles of British East Africa, the springbuck of South Africa, and the various other true gazelles of Africa and Asia. One animal somewhat closely resembles him, the dibatag, or Clarke's gazelle of Somaliland, but the gerenuk exhibits even greater elongation of neck than the dibatag. Whether seen with fore-legs planted high against a tree-trunk and head thrust up amongst

boughs five or six feet from the ground, or quietly stealing away into the friendly cover of the bushes with neck out-thrust, the gerenuk is as grotesque as he is interesting. In height he averages about three feet three inches at the shoulder, but his neck is of such extraordinary length that sprigs and leaves growing almost twice that height above the ground can be reached by a full-grown ram by placing his fore-legs against a tree. This curious characteristic is well known to the natives. One often hears an East African "pagazi" or "safari" porter speak of the gerenuk as the "twiga kidogo," or little giraffe. There are, as a matter of fact, two or three points of resemblance between these two animals, so vastly different in bulk and colour. Both, for instance, are possessed of extraordinary eyesight as well as remarkable length of neck. Both, too, select as their environment the fringes of desert land—dry, arid, sandy country, sparsely covered with bush.

In Somaliland and Northern British East Africa gerenuk find their ideal conditions. During my two weeks' sojourn on the Northern Guaso Nyiro river I saw large numbers of these gazelles, and after a great deal of hard work and many disappointments, I managed to secure four "Waller's." They are exceedingly inquisitive and wary animals, and whilst apparently not possessed of very keen scent, they seem to be continually peering at you from over the tops of short, stunted bushes. The long serpent-shaped necks of an indefinite rufous-fawn colour, with horns fourteen or fifteen inches long, and curved forward at the tips (in the males only) surmounting them, are generally all that one

sees, as the wily animal seldom allows his pursuer to come within seventy or eighty yards of him. Until one has actually slain his gerenuk it is difficult to realize what a remarkable length of neck there is, and the shoulder shot when fired at a covered mark generally goes high. The neck itself is exceedingly thin and difficult to hit, especially in tangled bush. Moreover, the smash of a bullet spoils the trophy in the case of a gerenuk or dibatag, if hit in the neck, much more so than in the case of any other animal.

Shot after shot I missed at these beasts, and although I stalked them for hours at a time, it was some days before one at last fell to my rifle. Unfortunately this was a doe, which I mistook for a ram, some stunted thorn-tree boughs immediately behind her making it appear that she carried horns. The next evening, however, I shot a good ram carrying 13¾-inch horns, and a few days later secured two more males, one with a 14¾-inch head, which is well-nigh up to the top record of British East Africa, though considerably below the best for Somaliland, where horns go up to as much as seventeen inches. Still I was exceedingly pleased at getting these specimens, as I consider that any one may well be proud of securing any kind of gerenuk head. Hunting these elusive animals calls for exercise of those qualities of patience, eyesight and judgment, which are the stock-in-trade of a big-game hunter, in a greater degree than almost any other antelope that graces the African continent.

North of the Guaso Nyiro is a great desert land sparsely peopled by nomads—Rendile and Borani shepherds, Somali and Abyssinian traders

and raiders. On our return from the Guaso to Nairobi we met an enormous caravan of Borani traders returning home after taking down a lot of ponies for the horse-dealers of the Protectorate. There were more than sixty camels, and as the animals moved slowly past us with their necks outstretched to their native north, and that look of infinite suffering and resignation which a camel always bears, the wooden bells around their necks tinkled and clouds of dust rose off the dry, sandy soil, and blew away to the greener pastures around Kenia. We were returning to Nairobi by a route different to that by which we had reached the Guaso. This time our steps were set towards Nyeri—we were going to complete a circle around the mountain—and we began to notice a change in the fauna. Giraffe became much scarcer, and the handsome Grevy's zebra was replaced by the more common type of Burchell's.

Here, too, we saw our last gerenuk. A little farther on an old Jackson's hartebeeste bull was observed running with a herd of oryx. Then Thomson's gazelle—those pretty little antelopes which are for ever whisking their bushy tails and are commonly known as "Tommies"—began to be fairly plentiful. About half-way on the march to Nyeri from the river, I shot rather a fine specimen of a Serval cat. They are savage little beasts, handsomely marked and almost miniature leopards in appearance and disposition.

The great adventure of this trek, however, was a lion and leopard hunt in an immense swamp about five days from Nyeri. There was a good deal of spoor around, and as nearly all the tracks seemed to lead towards this great mass of high-growing reeds and dense grass, it

appeared that the swamp was likely to yield some good sport. It very nearly yielded tragedy. Two porters, one a Kavirondo and the other a Wanyamwezi, were badly mauled by an enormous lioness whilst beating the reeds. At first all the efforts of the beaters, despite frenzied yells and trumpets improvised out of oryx horns, were of no avail. The only animal that bolted from cover was a bush-buck. Mohamed, the Somali headman, then had the reeds fired. The flames came tearing down the swamp, crackling and roaring with the madness of the fire. A lioness suddenly rose almost from beneath the feet of the porters. A Wanyamwezi foolishly hit her full between the eyes with a heavy stick. Instantly she turned on him, and her cruel claws tore his wrist and hand as though they had been pieces of string and matchwood instead of muscle and bone. Then the brute dashed at a Kavirondo and fixed her fangs in his arm. At once the swamp was alive with yelling natives and Somalis screaming at the top of their voices, their fuzzy hair blowing in the wind like the locks of madmen. The fire came rushing on, and I stationed myself on the edge of the swamp and close to where, according to a half-breed Masai-Kikuyu porter, the lioness was lying up. With an ugly sound—partly a grunt, partly a snarl, and partly a belch—a magnificent lioness bounded away into the swamp before the oncoming flames. As she rose I fired at her with my ·375, and think I hit her, but rather far back. Elmi swore that she was hard hit.

The next encounter with her was on the outer fringe of the swamp. She lay crouching underneath a fair-sized bush, but for the life of me, I could not make the brute's form out. At last,

however, I saw what I fancied was her Demoniacal Majesty, and I sent a bullet into the crouching, almost concealed shape. The lioness rose from the bush like a rocket, bounded a full ten feet into the air and dashed away. I missed her badly as she galloped towards the unburned portions of the swamp. Then followed some very skilful spooring on the part of Elmi and Okote (one of the Kavirondo "askaris"). I was looking straight ahead at a dense clump of bushes when something caught my eye. It was the tail of the lioness, swishing slowly to and fro. Again I fired, and again to my great disappointment the animal bounded off. We now followed her across a little stream up to the edge of the burning reeds, but where or how she had gone it was impossible to tell. I was peering into a clump of unburnt bushes when Elmi clutched me by the shoulder and whispered "Leopard!" Looking to where his finger pointed, I saw a crouching mass of tawny skin and black spots, but where lay head and where tail I could not discover. However, it was not a time for investigation. I had nearly stumbled on the brute, so I fired at once, and had the satisfaction of hearing the bullet hit with a resounding "vup." But my luck was all out that afternoon, for the leopard, too, sneaked away into the dense bushes. After him we went; and with a wounded lioness mad with blood and fury and fright, and a wounded leopard in that acre or two of covert, and with a roaring bush-fire burning and crackling all around us, I must confess it was quite as exciting an experience as ever I wish for. At last I espied the leopard crouching flat on the ground. I quickly put two bullets into him, and the boys dragged him out—a very fine specimen with the

pads of his feet scorched by the flames. Of the lioness I saw nothing more. She evaded the flames and her pursuers somehow, and though badly wounded she got clean away. The next morning we went right through the unburned portion of the swamp, thinking she might be lying up there, but it was of no avail.

The two mauled " boys " were bandaged and their wounds bathed with corrosive sublimate and permanganate of potash. The Wanyamwezi quickly recovered, but the Kavirondo had to be taken to the Nyeri Hospital and left in charge of the Indian attendant there. He was making fair progress, however, and wept when I told him that he could not continue on the " safari," but would have to be medically treated until the bites of the lioness had healed. It is wonderful how quickly the most fearful cuts and tears heal up in a native. The wounds the unfortunate Kavirondo sustained would probably have meant death to the majority of white men, but I feel quite certain that to-day he is none the worse for his mauling.

On the open plains outside Nyeri, we enjoyed some good sport with Jackson's hartebeeste and Thomson's gazelle. There was, however, not a great deal of game around there, and what there was took a tremendous amount of stalking, for it was very, very wild and shy. One afternoon I had a hard hunt after " Jackson's " or " kongoni "—all hartebeeste are spoken of as " kongoni " by the East African natives. The herd was not a large one, and the old sentry bull was exceedingly wary. To make matters more difficult, a huge troop of zebra would insist on manœuvring round and round the suspicious antelope. Of course whenever I managed to

get within range of the Jackson's the zebra would tear off with a gallop that shook the earth, and away would go the Jackson's with them. At length, after trudging miles and miles, I got a long shot at a cow and dropped her with a bullet through the heart. It was well-nigh dark, and when I returned to camp at the Rongui River night had fallen over the land, and, although on the Equator, it was most bitterly cold. To the east and above us Kenia raised her snow-draped head, and the blasts that blew from off her frozen summit were like the winds of the Pole. It was indeed a six-blanket climate, and woe betide the unknowing man who may hunt on the Nyeri plains with a mosquito net and a counterpane as his bedclothes!

From Nyeri the "safari" marched through the southern foothills of Kenia and into Fort Hall. A few miles farther on we boarded the Fort Hall motor 'bus, and arrived at the Norfolk Hotel about two o'clock in the morning, after one of the most cramped and tiring rides it has ever been my unfortunate lot to endure. Two days later the porters arrived in charge of Mohamed the headman, who, as a great privilege, had been allowed to ride my Abyssinian pony. Mohamed had managed to give the willing little animal a sore back, for which I cursed him roundly.

After our sojourn in the wilds, Nairobi, with its stone-built offices and residences and iron-roofed stores, seemed a colossal place—almost a metropolis, in fact. And yet, although it is the capital of the East African Protectorate, it cannot (or could not at the time of which I write) boast of one thousand white inhabitants. Its population for the greater part consists of

IN A SAMBURU "MANYATTA"

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Indians, Somalis, natives who have had the edges of their savagery blunted ever so little, and the coloured riff-raff of the East Coast. It is a town that exudes ghee and the odours of Asia, and with its bazaars and bungalows, and helmets and puttees, it has more of the appearance of India than Africa. Nairobi has a subtle fascination of its own, as, indeed, has the whole of British East Africa.

There are few countries on the face of the globe that captivate so readily as the East African Protectorate. And the fascination does not wear off. Absence can make the heart grow fonder in the case of places as well as of people. The longer you stay away from East Africa the stronger becomes the power of the spell. It is a lovely as well as a very remarkable country. The English aristocrat and the Kikuyu " shenzi " (savage) rub shoulders in this wonderful land where everything is vast and large and free. You may observe a man, bronzed and bearded, with hair falling over his shoulders, bare-kneed and bare-chested, horny-handed and dirty. If you saw such a person in your garden in England you would immediately set the bulldog on him. But on inquiry you may ascertain that this individual whom you see labouring on the great escarpments or the rolling plains is Lord So-and-So. Blanket-clad and clay-smeared, with spear in hand, there stands beside him Yanga Yanga, a Wakamba savage. It is a country of more than ordinary attractions that makes this possible. And you may leave East Africa and seek your gilded joys in the bustle of the world's highways, but East Africa will call you back. The latest æsthetic dancers of St. Petersburg may please you, but there will come

a deep, all-powerful longing to see in their stead two hundred Kikuyu spearmen. You may enjoy your supper at the Savoy, but you cannot deceive yourself: the tough kongoni steak devoured on the Thika River was far better.

CHAPTER XIII

BRITISH EAST AFRICA (CONTINUED): ON SAFARI TO SOTIK

DOWN the western edge of the Kikuyu escarpment the train came snorting and puffing, as though terrified of some unseen foe that hunted it along the metal road of the Uganda Railway. Below us the last golden lights of the sun lingered on that immense ditch on the face of Africa, which extends from Lake Nyasa to the Dead Sea, and is known as the Great Rift Valley. Out of evening haze and gathering gloom there loomed up the crater masses of Longonot and Suswa, and in the fast-darkening foreground Mount Margaret took rugged shape. The locomotive twisted around a bend in the highway that leads to Victoria Nyanza, and above us tall cedar trees and the dense bush which gives cover to the shy bongo antelope, seemed as the outlines of a phantom garden tended by giants of the air. Down, down, down the train dashed, over Yankee-built viaducts, twisting, curving, ever descending till it halted exhausted at Kijabe at the foot of the cliff.

The last tinges of red and gold and ochre had died in the western sky, and it was with lanterns and much peering that we bundled our porters, Somali servants, ponies and impedimenta out of the train. Kijabe means "the wind," and the place is well named. Behind the little station

rises Kijabe mountain, one of the lesser guardians of snow-capped Kenia—queen of East African peaks. Kijabe seems to be set in the centre of a giant funnel down which storms and gusts are for ever blowing, and the mountain does not break the force of these winds, it merely serves to distribute the air eddies and send them whirling around the camp of any traveller who may pass that way. However, such things as tents being blown down or fired by drifting sparks, are mere humorous incidents when one is going a-hunting after big game.

We had elected to start away from this tempestuous little place on our journey to Sotik—a vast and little-settled district of British East Africa that abuts on the northern frontier of German territory. A few weeks before Rainey, the American, and his pack of hounds had accounted for twenty-six lions in this part of the Protectorate, and with a view to having a share of the excellent sport which we were assured was to be obtained there, we had hired a wagon and a span of oxen. To reach the Sotik country one has to travel over a "thirst-belt"—a country where, at the time of the year we set out on our journey (October), water is exceedingly scarce, and long marches have to be made.

On our journey to the North we had a "safari" (caravan) of close on a hundred porters, gun-bearers, personal servants, syces, etc., but for this expedition we deemed it better to travel with only ten porters and six Somali attendants—three gun-bearers, a syce, a personal servant and a headman. The African "pagazi" (carrier) is but a poor beast of burden in a dry, waterless country, and the hiring of an ox-wagon seemed by far and away the best method of reaching

the Southern Guaso Nyiro River, which runs through some of the best Sotik game country. The morning after our arrival at Kijabe we came to terms with Mr. Postma in the matter of transport, gave directions for the wagon to wait for us on the eastern side of Mount Margaret, saddled up and rode off. We soon began to see a little game—ungainly Coke's hartebeestes, a few pig and a herd or two of Grant's gazelle. But they were all very wild, and it was not till late evening that I managed to bring down a Grant's gazelle of the variety "Typica." I had been after this herd for an hour or more on the western side of Mount Margaret.

Time after time they had fled in precipitous fear just as I was on the point of firing at a ram with what seemed a particularly good pair of horns. Five or six little Thomson's kept hovering round the Grant's, and acted the annoying part of sentinels. I crawled and crept after the desired trophy, taking advantage of every particle of cover in the shape of bushes and grass tussocks that offered. But time after time, too, the "Tommies" anticipated my shot and, with tails perpetually flicking from side to side, they would dash away, attended, of course, by the Grant's. There are few things more tantalizing in big-game hunting than this. Zebra are a particular nuisance in every part of Africa where large wild animals abound, and many and many a time I have cursed them with all the vehemence I could lay my tongue to. Often when about to take an easy shot at some particularly coveted antelope, I have heard the ground thunder with the sound of hundreds of galloping hoofs, and a great drove of striped horses has dashed away towards the sky-line, and with them the

Jackson's hartebeeste, or the oryx, or whatever I was stalking at the time has gone madly away.

But sometimes the warning is quite silent. The guardian animals that you do not want to shoot seem to realize their safety, and you may be wholly hidden from the game you are after and with the wind absolutely in your favour. Then it is, I believe, that wild animals employ some form of sympathetic telepathy. The animals in safety signal across a silent warning to their friends in jeopardy, and you sight your rifle on a cloud of dust. I do not think this is a far-fetched idea. After all, what do we know of the reasoning of the animal mind, we who cannot understand our own?

When the Thomson's gazelle had scurried away, I increased my efforts to get the "Grant's," especially as the day was beginning to wane and camp was a long way off. At last I saw the three rams I had been pursuing for so long standing together, alternately cropping at the grass on the plains, and raising their graceful heads in search of danger. It seems terrible and cruel that the fairest of God's wild creatures should live in an everlasting agony of fear: terror of the slaughtering maniacs who carry a rifle by day; terror of the prowling lion, the foul, cunning leopard, or the cheetah—the animal that kills its prey by strangulation—when darkness has sent the big-game hunter to his bed. But it is a decree of Creation, a decree as pitiless as it is unalterable, and all the antelopes in Africa outside of "zoos" and the two-mile sanctuary of the Uganda Railway have come to realize it.

These were not my reflections, however, as I crept up behind the cover of a bush to the three rams. At such times one can only think

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in terms of game and shooting. Some unhappy incident must have caused the Grant's to look for danger in exactly the opposite direction to the fateful bush. I got within about eighty yards of the trio and steadied my rifle, elbow on knee. For a moment the dying glare of the sun blinded me. Then I saw the three rams had their heads turned to the last glory of the day. One suddenly whipped around and snorted, but before he could move my bullet sped into the neck of the finest gazelle and he toppled over dead. It was then that Elmi, my Somali hunter-boy, dashed up from behind me and cut the head and neck off while I rode through the dusk to the wagon and the cheerful fires that burned around it.

This Grant's gazelle was of the "Typica" variety—*Gazella granti Typica.* The horns are very long and lyrate, and are more divergent than those of the "Notata" species, which I had seen in great numbers between Mount Kenia and the Abyssinian frontier. They lack the spread of the "Robertsi" variety—a species of buck which we saw and shot in Sotik—but they make very handsome trophies. Indeed I know of no buck in Africa which for its size —a Grant's averages about thirty-three inches at the shoulders—carries such a large and symmetrical head as this noble and stately gazelle.

One has to be a sound sleeper to slumber peacefully on an ox-wagon, travelling a rough path. But a hard day's hunting on an African plain is a wonderfully potent sleeping-draught; and though the wagon bumped terrifically over tree-stumps, bolted down the side of a dried-up ravine, and staggered and trembled as the brow on the other side was gained, I was soon as deep in the arms of Morpheus as I should have been

between sheets at the Norfolk Hotel—the hostelry *plus grande magnifique* of the East African Protectorate. The oxen were inspanned about ten o'clock, and we travelled during the cool hours of the night. Dawn found our wandering home rumbling along over the little beaten and broken roadway that leads to Sotik. In the steel-grey light we could discern the forms of Longonot to the right and Suswa nearer on our left. Before us were hills, and then a great table-shaped ridge of land that ran along the leaden sky-line until it disappeared in the dim dawn—it was the Mau. Behind us the Kikuyu escarpment stood out black and sombre like a giant black cloud-bank. We were travelling through a great trough, one of the subsidiary rents in the Rift Valley.

Brighter and brighter grew the east. A blush of pink, delicate and beautiful, seemed to do battle with the sullen, steely frown of daybreak. I watched the contest idly and waited to see dawn win the day and proclaim her victory in gorgeous tints and colourings.

Then I slid down from the wagon, rifle in hand, and shouted to Elmi to follow. Out on the plain shapes were moving, galloping, running or walking quietly along. As the light grew better I could see great herds of tawny-coloured, ungainly-looking antelopes—Coke's hartebeestes, perhaps the most common animals of British East Africa. Zebra were there, too, in great numbers; and in the early daylight they appeared the colour of modern British ironclads—the colour of Navy paint. On the other side of the path half-a-dozen stately Grant's gazelle rushed madly away towards Longonot, disturbed by the groaning and straining of the

lumbering wagon and the hoarse shouts of our Masai wagon-driver. With them, of course, galloped a host of "Tommies," their rich rufous brown coats and white tails giving them a particularly handsome appearance in the fresh morning light.

Clearly I must get ahead of the wagon; the noise of the cumbersome vehicle jolting and bumping along was enough to frighten away game for miles around. Yet in the early morn, buck are less suspicious, and are more easily approached than when the sun is high. So it was that after calling to Burru, my Somali syce, to bring my Abyssinian pony, I rode a little ahead of the wagon and found the plain absolutely covered with game. It was a scene such as is to be viewed in exceedingly few parts of the world to-day, and it recalled to my mind the sporting classics of Cornwallis Harris and Gordon Cumming—those men who were fortunate enough to see South Africa in its natural state before the unsightly miles of barbed wire and galvanized iron ousted the springbuck, the wildebeeste and the gemsbok. There was a vast group of hartebeeste families, old bulls, their heads raised in watchful interest, younger bulls close to the patriarchal watchers, cows and fawns behind. There a battalion of zebra faced me and snorted with fear and curiosity. Grant's gazelle in countless troops, "Tommies" well-nigh as plentiful as stunted tussocks of grass—it was indeed a wondrous spectacle. "Wuff! wuff! wuff!" the matutinal grunts of a lion away in the Suswa foothills reminded me that there were sterner members of fauna on the plains than antelope that morning. That sound so clearly vibrated across the pure,

still morning air might be within one hundred yards, so distinct does it seem, but, as a matter of fact, that lion is at least five or six miles distant.

I had now wandered a long way to the right of the track being pursued by the wagon, and confined my attentions to some "Tommies." There was absolutely no cover, and where the Thomson's gazelle were frolicking around the land was as flat as the surface of a billiard-table. The sun was mounting high in the heavens, and I quickly made up my mind to resort to tactics other than crawling snake-like along the ground. Keeping the suspicious Thomson's in the corner of my eye, I commenced to walk in a circle around them with my head turned away from the gazelles, as though I took no interest in them whatever. At first the radius of my circle, with the "Tommies" as the centre, was, perhaps, two hundred yards. Gradually I decreased this radius, still walking slowly and unconcernedly around. The gazelles in the centre went on feeding, and now and then the rams would throw up their stately little heads, or gaze at me, half, I suppose, in fear, half in wonder at my peregrinations. At last I had decreased my circle to about one hundred and twenty yards radius. I quietly sat down, and just as the best ram was about to bolt I got him right on the shoulder with a lead-nosed express bullet that put a speedy end to his cogitations and fright.

Where no cover offers this circuitous plan often acts very satisfactorily. I have tried it with tsessebe on the great Bangweolo plains in British Central Africa with good results, and in the East African Protectorate most of my "Tommies" were obtained in this way. It is

said that the red man of North America devised this scheme of getting within bow-and-arrow range of game on open plains, but as a matter of fact it is one of those instinctive methods that are part and parcel of the hunting brain, and you may be quite sure that the Bushman and Bantu in Africa have dealt death in this manner for quite as many years as the Sioux.

A word as to the Thomson's gazelle. This handsome little animal is an inhabitant of the interior districts of British and German East Africa. In colour the "Tommy" is a deep sandy rufous, with sharply defined markings, a central deep rufous face streak, and a narrow black band bordering the white on the sides of the rump. A full-grown male stands about twenty-six inches high at the shoulder, and weighs at a rough estimate half a hundredweight. It is a pretty sight to view a family of "Tommies" feeding on the vast, open grass plains of East Africa. Tails for ever twitching from side to side, the beautiful rich hue of their bodies shows up handsomely against the verdant background. When alarmed, they race over the ground in sharp, quick gallops, but as soon as they consider they have placed a fair distance between themselves and their pursuers, they immediately begin grazing again. The rams are pugnacious little creatures, and seem to be for ever doing battle between one another. Rivals for a doe's favours will charge like "knights so bold in days of old." There is a woman in the case even on the Suswa plains.

About midday the wagon was drawn up alongside one of two trees that threw no shade, and the hot, thirsty oxen were outspanned. There was a pool a couple of hundred yards off, and to

this the tired animals immediately made their way. Vast herds of game drank their fill morning and evening at this muddy puddle, so that the water we drew from it was anything but a healthy-looking beverage. The sun poured down with a merciless glare. Even the wood of the wagon seemed burning hot, and to touch metal was to endure torture. Around us stretched the vast flats of the Kedong Valley, and the earth seemed to dance and vibrate in the sheen and fire of the sun's rays. Just in front were a number of rugged rocks, and beyond the escarpment of the Mau told of a stiff climb to come. It seemed only fitting during those burning hours that Longonot and Suswa should take on crater shapes, for it was as though the air was charged with cinders hurled from depths pyrogenous. Longonot is a mountain whereof many weird tales are told. It is the Erebus of the Masai, and is held to harbour spirits, devils and snakes in its crater mouth. Wherefore it is spoken of in bated breath, and regarded with a reverent and awed fear.

The whole of this immense rift in East Africa is a land of spirits and hobgoblins and superstitions to the native mind, and a region wonderful and fearful in the eyes of modern science. It gave to Rider Haggard suggestions for his fiction in *Allan Quatermain*, since it is said by the Masai, that at the west end of Lake Naivasha there is a subterranean passage that leads to a land peopled by inhabitants with white faces. There is, in truth, a great tunnel on the Mau side of this beautiful sheet of water, and perchance Nature has burrowed a warren deep below the grand escarpments, whereof the western gate is in the Victoria Nyanza. It is a valley that has

a wonderful history in the geological pages of Nature; and though Longonot and the other eminences in the trough have ceased to spit forth fire and ashes, even to-day the valley sometimes exhibits phenomena such as local shrinkage and upheaval, which have perplexed such men of learning as have had occasion to visit there.

That afternoon I strolled a few yards away from the camp with Elmi. Espying a herd of "Tommies" feeding on the plain, we made a wide detour, and, creeping up behind some rocks, I saw the stately little gazelles feeding peacefully in front of me. I singled out a doe that carried quite a remarkable pair of horns for a female. It was an easy shot, and the antelope fell over stone dead.

It was cold and barely light the next morning when we left our blankets and trudged to beyond the water-hole, where a kill had been laid below the rugged rocks. As we neared the brow of the rise we crept down, for the morning light was beginning to flood the plain, and it was necessary to approach with extreme caution. Cabara, one of the Somali gun-bearers, with his usual excitability, suddenly jumped up, and in a hoarse whisper that could have been heard a mile away, said something about "lions." The two other Somalis shouted "Shoot! Shoot!" and thrust my rifle into my hands. Yes, there was certainly something at the zebra, but already the animal was toddling away as fast as his night's gorge would allow. And then just as Cabara and Elmi together muttered "Fire!" in a tone of colossal disgust, I perceived that the marauder was nothing more than a scavenging hyæna. Many and many a time have I been disappointed in this way. In the early morning

the beast of prey crouches down on his haunches and has a last long and lingering taste of the entrails of his kill. It is at first often very difficult to distinguish what the half-hidden carnivore really is, and more than once I have felt my heart leap with joy, only to find a moment afterwards that what might have been the King of Beasts was only a slinking cur, an animal that is held in contempt all over Africa.

But big-game hunting, like every other game worth playing, has many disappointments as well as joys, so I watched the brute till he was well-nigh out of sight, sent a final curse after him, and then returned to camp and breakfast.

The sun was high above the frowning ridge of the Kikuyu escarpment when we moved onwards again towards the wall of the Mau. Somewhat refreshed by an eighteen hours' halt, the oxen were driven from the muddy pool that had proved the elixir of life to them, and were yoked in. Jusef Jama, our Somali headman, soon had the impedimenta aboard the wagon, or on the heads of the " pagazis " (porters), and with much rumbling and creaking we started off again. Our wagon driver was a little Masai, who had gained his knowledge of " dusselbooms " and " yokeskeys " with a small colony of South African farmers who had settled in the Kedong Valley; and an admirable driver he proved himself. He had acquired an extensive vocabulary of Dutch words such as are generally used by transport riders in the Transvaal and the Free State. The majority of these epithets are quite unprintable, but they seem to work wonders with oxen. In fact, Dutch is the only language which cattle, mules and donkeys

appear to understand. Dutch is the *lingua franca* of the beasts of burden.

I stayed behind the wagon for some time that morning in order to stalk a small herd of Grant's gazelle. One ram among them appeared to carry an uncommonly fine head, and after much manœuvring I at last got in a good "end on" shot, and brought him down with a bullet that raked him through from stern to neck. The horns were indeed a prize—beautifully lyrate in shape and substantially longer than those secured two evenings before. Chama, our third gun-bearer, dexterously skinned the head and neck and shouldered the trophies. After an hour's hard tramp I found Burru, my Somali syce, waiting for me alongside the Sotik road with my Abyssinian pony. I mounted and soon caught up with the wagon.

All day we travelled onwards; onwards and upwards, for we had begun the ascent of the great Mau escarpment—one of those giant corrugations that robe the geography of the East African Protectorate in a colossal suit of corduroys. Game became less and less plentiful, and each little valley and donga was as dry as a bone; we were getting into Thirst-land. The porters had been told to fill up all the available canvas water-carriers and bottles at the previous night's camping-place, but with that lack of forethought which is characteristic of the African native, they had omitted to do so. Late in the afternoon they came to us and whined for water. But the supply in the drums on the wagon was very small, and as the next few days' march was an unknown quantity to us, we refused to give them a drop. They had to pay the penalty for their irresponsibility, disobedience and laziness with a

vengeance, for the heat was intense and the march long, trying and dusty. Just before dusk we camped on the spur of a hill about half-way up the side of the Mau. One of the porters assured us that he could find water in the vicinity. After a protracted search he succeeded, and ere long masters, servants, horses and oxen were all in a deep slumber.

It was about three o'clock in the morning when we inspanned the oxen and began to climb the last crags of the Mau. By the light of lanterns and firebrands our Somalis and servants packed the various items of impedimenta away on the wagon, and at last we satisfied ourselves that nothing was left behind, and the rumbling and creaking of the wagon, the straining of the oxen and the hoarse yells of the drivers told that another day's "trek" had commenced. Bumping over tree-stumps, rocking and shaking as great ruts in the track were crossed, we at last reached the summit. By this time the sun had risen and flooded the escarpment, the great, dreary plateau that lay ahead of us, and the valley of the Kedong now in the dim distance in warmth and splendour. There was practically no game to be observed on this table-land, but now and then we saw giraffe, their long, giant necks standing up like mammalian spectres above the dried grass and stunted shrubs of the arid plateau. At mid-day the wagon began the descent of a rugged, stony ravine, where at certain favoured times a stream must have coursed. Elmi went up the banks to see if he could discover any water, that priceless commodity whereof no one can realize the true value till he has searched for it with parched throat in the wastes of Africa and has failed to find it.

It was an abominable spot, this dry ravine of fiery heat. The water in the wagon drums was running very short, and it was therefore with considerable relief that we at last heard Elmi return and shout the comforting word "maji!" (water!). In truth, there was very little of it, but such as there was sufficed to appease the thirsty "safari" for a time, and in the afternoon we travelled on again.

At dusk we reached a little flowing stream. It was a most sorry apology for a rivulet, but it was the first trickle of running water that we had seen for several days, and its appearance was in refreshing contrast to the few dirty, muddy pools along the line of march from Kijabe.

The next day we reached the broader waters of Ongorra Narok. It was close to this river, which boasts of a full-blooded Masai name, that I had an uncomfortable experience with that diabolical thing the "jigger flea."

I had been stalking some Thomson's gazelle, and a long thorn had run into the side of one of my canvas boots. I had pulled the thorn out of my foot and was just putting my sock on again when I heard an exclamation from Elmi. The next instant he was kneeling by my side and pointed with the thorn to my big toe. "This very bad, sir," he muttered, and I then for the first time noticed a peculiar round and ball-shaped swelling by the side of the nail. Instantly it flashed across my mind what this curious protuberance signified.

"Jigger?" I queried.

"Yes," answered Elmi. "Jigger. Him very bad. Take him out quick," and forthwith he dug out the bag of flea eggs with the thorn, leaving a big hole which pained considerably.

But it would have been much worse had the operation been delayed, for the "jigger," like another African curse, the "buffalo bean," must have been created in a moment of vindictiveness against mankind in general. Toes have sometimes to be amputated as a result of this devilish little insect. Wherefore, you who may tread the earth of lesser-known Africa, beware the "jigger!" Wear thick boots and have a periodical toe inspection!

We left the Ongorra Narok about three o'clock in the cool of the morning, and shortly after daybreak reached the Guaso Nyiro river, an unbeautiful stream flowing through a dry and fly-plagued country, with here and there a few mournful trees standing up to break the monotony of the plain, and in the background great, inhospitable, stony hills. We found a store on the south bank, a ramshackle establishment presided over by a solitary young South African. I do not envy him his lot. We partook of his hospitality in the shape of fried eggs, and then marched out on to the plain covered with wildebeeste, hartebeeste, Grant's and Thomson's gazelles, to a water-hole, where we established our camp.

I find the 16th of October recorded as a red-letter day in my diary. It was somewhat late when I left the camp by the water-hole; and, attended by Elmi and a couple of porters, rode towards the Guaso Nyiro. We had not gone a mile before sighting a great herd of white-bearded gnu picking at the sun-dried herbage of the plain. A belt of leafless shrubs intervened between us and them, and I crept up to this line of cover, intent on achieving better success than had been my lot the day before, when I had

missed a good wildebeeste bull very badly. Some of the wildebeeste pranced madly forward and were soon raising a cloud of dust as they headed towards the river. But other members of the herd—there were about forty of them altogether—stood their ground, and with snorts of fear and curiosity raised their shaggy heads and gazed in my direction.

One animal appeared to stand out prominently among the others. It may have been that he was closer, it may have been that he was the finest member of the congregation, but I made up my mind in a moment that this was an animal worth trying for. Creeping behind one of the withered bushes, I got a steady sight on his shoulders just about a hundred and thirty yards away. As soon as one pulls the trigger one knows, after much hunting and shooting, whether the murderous little missile has got home or not. Instinctively I felt I had recorded a hit almost before the bullet had left the rifle barrel, and I was far less surprised than pleased when I saw the gnu lying on the ground, his legs giving a few convulsive kicks.

Elmi dashed up to him in high glee, and the porters, as usual, beamed at the prospect of more "nyama"—the amount of meat an African can stow away under his black hide has always been a source of unalloyed amazement to me. He was a good bull with a remarkable breadth of horn around the base. He lay there on the weary flatness of the Loita Plain, quite still and silent; and the sun, now high in the heavens, poured down on his carcase, while the blood bubbled slowly out of the hole that went deep into his heart, and ended in a mangled mass of blood and lead and nickel.

It is a curious contradiction of desire and thought that fills the breast of the big-game hunter—unless he be built of stone and adamant—after such an incident as this. The lust of killing is only satiated by the falling crash of some truly magnificent and ponderous quadruped, and then there inevitably comes a wave of pity and regret. Yet ten minutes afterwards, when I espied two fine Grant's, their graceful heads raised in suspicion and the spread of their horns standing clear and distinct against the sky-line, there returned this demon of slaughter. To cut a long and uninteresting story of stalks and shots short, I at last secured both of these. Another fine wildebeeste bull also fell to my rifle that morning, and I returned to camp a butcher unashamed of his butchery.

CHAPTER XIV

BRITISH EAST AFRICA (CONTINUED): MORE HUNTING IN SOTIK—KIJABE MOUNTAIN

WHEN day broke over the plains of the Loita we could gaze on a wonderful zoological scene from the very doors of our tent. Stretching away before us was a vast expanse, here and there studded with small belts of trees and clusters of wilderness scrub. And on this African prairie wildebeeste, gazelles, hartebeeste and zebra roamed at will in veritable armies and mingled with the goats and sheep and cattle of the Southern Masai. For this dreary, arid flatness has with a fine show of charity been handed over to those lithe, ochre-stained savages who are the native overlords of East Africa. A quarter of a century ago the Masai were the terrors of Eastern Equatoria. Yet their subjugation has been a practically bloodless contest. But they are still the native patricians of East Africa. Work they scorn, and their vast herds of cattle render them magnificently independent. Here as in North America, when the interests of those savages who have owned the land for centuries has clashed with the interests of the white man, the native has had to give way before the alien. The rich pasturages of the Rift valley and the plateaux were the favourite grazing-grounds of the Masai, but the white man has need of them, and in our Imperial liberality we have said to

the Masai, "The luxuriance of the Loita plains is yours. Go there and prosper." That the Masai have not found contentment in their new domains is common knowledge in East Africa. But the fiat has gone forth, and who are the Masai that they should object to our schemes of settlement?

There was one old chief who used to tend his flocks not far from our camp and who was a most amiable old person. Elmi acted as the medium of interpretation, and he told me of a great black-maned lion that used to "Wuff, wuff" in the rocky hills beyond the water-hole in the gray hours before the dawn. I can see the old fellow now as I write, one thin, wiry leg resting with the foot above the knee of the other, his long seven-foot spear grasped firmly in hand, the seared and wizened old face beaming with the joy of imparting valuable knowledge. Around his neck was a snuff-box cunningly constructed out of a brass cartridge case. He was clad in a foul-smelling leathern jerkin with beaded edges that dropped loosely over the legs akimbo. Quaint old fellow! He looked for all the world like a marabout stork!

As for his lions, I saw no trace of them during my sojourn in Sotik. Yet only a few weeks before Rainey, the American millionaire, with his pack of hounds, "chivied" out and slew over a score from the self-same kopjes that looked down on our camp by the water-hole.

One evening Elmi and I tramped all over the rocky hillocks into which deep bush-covered ravines ran. Elmi, with keen relish in the remembrance of more fortunate "safaris," showed me where a couple of lions had stood at bay, where a great fellow with a fine grizzled mane had

A FINE EAST AFRICAN IMPALA

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BOHOR REED-BUCK, MAU ESCARPMENT

charged in most desperate fashion, from where no less than five of the beasts had bolted.

Below us a herd of impala dashed plainwards with long, graceful bounds and vanished amongst the scrub. A gorgeous panorama of the world abandoned lay stretched out before us. Northwards we could look beyond the sluggish course of the Guaso Nyiro to the knife edge of the Mau; southwards, to where in the dim distance flat-topped hills ran along the German frontier. Westwards we could gaze on land that was but a day's march distant from Victoria Nyanza, eastwards to the plains that hold the wonderful Soda lake. The light was still good enough to enable us to make out the straggling shapes of great herds of game. Close in to the foot of the hills one or two ostriches moved along grotesquely, and beyond them the camp fires around the water-hole burned and seemed to spell out in twinkles of flame a message of comfort and good cheer.

These rugged hills, although they held no Kings of Beasts for me, added to my list of trophies spoils that do not often come the way of the hunter. One of these was a Chandler's reed-buck, which I espied one afternoon when scaling the kopjes. These animals, even more so than the klip-springer, are the chamois of Africa, and it was with much joy that I heard my bullet get home with a telling thud, for it was the first of these graceful little antelopes that I had ever shot. The other rarity was a porcupine found one morning in a ravine while I was searching for leopards. That was another red-letter day in my hunting annals, for, in addition to the porcupine, I secured two very good Thomson's gazelle heads and a fair harte-

beeste before returning to camp. That day, too, I had a long and wearying chase after a topi—the East African cousin of the tsessebe or "bastard hartebeeste" of the Boers. I had three years before, when hunting on the Mau escarpment, added a pair of topi horns to my collection. Otherwise I should have been sorely disappointed, for although my first shot told and the topi turned a complete somersault, I failed to come within range of the animal again.

Time and time again after a long and wearying snake-like crawl up to a little ant-heap, I would just be congratulating myself on being at last well-nigh able to take a long shot, when off would gallop the tantalizing beast into the heat haze that forever sheathes the Loita. Topi are indeed speedy animals, and their capacity for carrying an extraordinary amount of lead into safety is as remarkable as is their ability to outdistance the fastest shooting pony that ever looked through a bridle.

At length, after having secured all the specimens we desired and that were procurable on the dreary expanse of the Loita, we set our faces to the North again, bent on shooting the rare colobus monkey in Kijabe mountain before returning to Nairobi. The oxen after their rest at the water-hole responded readily to the shouts of the little Masai driver, and strained at their yokes on the homeward path with something almost akin to merriment.

In a couple of hours we had crossed the sluggish Guaso Nyiro and had said good-bye to the lonely young storekeeper who lived his solitary life of commerce in this dry and fly-cursed land. At eventide we had reached the Ongorra Narok, and by the next noon the Maji Mowa had been

crossed. That same evening we halted at the Sibi, where we found an American "safari" encamped under the guidance of Outram, a professional white hunter.

Two days afterwards we had descended the escarpment of the Mau and were trekking across the Suswa plains. At midday I left the wagon and brought down a fine Grant's gazelle, and then, as rain was falling, hastened on to where camp had been pitched under the brow of Suswa.

A quarter of a mile away Messrs. Stern and Webb's "safari" was encamped, and the porters from each expedition were carrying water from a little rill that ran amongst the Suswa foothills. I was just commencing lunch when Jusef, the Somali headman, rushed up to me breathless with the information that one of the "Bwana Webb's" boys, whilst searching for water up towards the base of the mountain, and not more than half a mile away, had seen a lion. Hastily seizing a rifle and calling Chama, I bolted off in the direction indicated by Jusef, and joined Stern and Webb, who were tearing over the rocky ground to where a solitary "pagazi" was perched on a little eminence. He was shouting and pointing towards where the "nek" of Suswa ran down to meet the plain at the foot of the Kikuyu escarpment. We raced up to him, and ascertained that down in the ravine below us he had been filling up his water-bottles when he suddenly became aware of the presence of a lion standing some yards away from him. For a few moments the boy and the King of Beasts stood facing one another, and then with a few grunts the lion had bounded away.

The native pointed to a small hillock on the top of which he said he had last seen the beast.

These small hillocks which lay at the foot of Suswa were separated from one another by deep bush-clad ravines. In places trees and tangled creepers met overhead, and we soon realized that the lion with his usual wiliness had in all probability slunk away down one of these semi-subterranean channels, and by now was in all probability safely concealed and a mile or two away. And so it proved. We beat these ravines. Webb and a gun-bearer walked down them, and Stern and I patrolled the sides, but Leo had made good his escape, and after an hour and a half of fruitless search we returned to our disturbed lunches.

That afternoon I was busy making up loads of trophies to be sent by porters into Nairobi. The next morning the wagon started off on the last lap of its homeward journey, and at evening we were again below the towering form of Kijabe mountain, and preparing to ascend it the next day after that singularly beautiful animal the colobus monkey. The ascent was no easy task. Indeed, I have seldom undertaken harder work. At first we had easy slopes to walk up. Then steep banks where the soft earth crumbled underfoot had to be scaled. After an hour's arduous toil we halted rather more than half-way up the mountain side. Our breath was coming in deep halting gasps, and we sat down in the shadow of the great primeval forest that robes Kijabe mountain and peered around for signs of the highly prized monkeys for which we had laboured so hard. We had just commenced to ascend again when the keen eyes of Elmi, ever on the alert, descried away to our right a colobus. Hastily we followed him, slipping down the treacherous earth banks, now and then grasping

at tree trunks that grew in grotesque shapes like octopi, or hauling ourselves up again by means of branches. Here vegetation grew in a dense and tangled riot, and peer as I might I could see no trace of the beautiful black and white ape, with hairs long and silky, and a snowy white beard that gives him the appearance of a grotesque Father Christmas.

Chama, the other gun-bearer, at length seized me by the arm and pointed straight in front of him. Still I could see nothing but leaves and twigs and branches all tangled together. Chama continued to point and gesticulate excitedly, but it was quite useless. I could only see lianas and creepers and giant trees, and here and there a rift in the sea of vegetation through which the blue tent of the equatorial sky was visible. And so I stood, impotent and annoyed, until I heard a faint rustle amongst the leaves and saw something that looked almost like some weird bird draped in black and white wool spring from the leafy shelter of one tree to another. The flight was so quick that my eye scarcely could follow it, but this time the colobus took refuge on a bough where the leaves were fewer and he afforded a comparatively easy shot. Steadying my rifle on Chama's shoulder, for my breath still was coming in quick gasps—I pulled the trigger. In the stillness of that primordial forest the shot rang out as though it were the blatant trump of doom. It echoed and re-echoed across deep ravines that only these arboreal monkeys could cross, and then there was a momentary silence and the sound of something falling far away down below us. Chama and I descended the side of the mountain again, and about one hundred feet below we found the colobus lying dead

on a bed of lichens. Although I had used a solid bullet his beautiful, hairy cloak was badly torn, and I decided that in future I should have to employ a shot-gun. As the monkey lay there in the dim light of the mountain woods I again felt one of those pangs of pity and remorse that sooner or later, I suppose, come to most people who, as a French newspaper has so well put it, say to one another: "Isn't it a lovely morning! Let's go and kill something!"

A few words more about the colobus before I take you to the top of Kijabe mountain.

The colobus is one of the Guereza family, of which about a dozen species are spread across Equatorial Africa. The white-tailed variety is the best known and most handsome. A robe of long, pure white and silky hair falls upon either side of his body, and contrasts with the coal-black mantle of the head and face. To see these extraordinarily beautiful little creatures peering down on you from the top of some immense cedar tree, their little faces peeping through the highest forks, is to witness one of the most quaintly picturesque sights of animal life in Africa. When covered by the high forks of the trees it is of course very difficult to hit these monkeys, for the shot as likely as not merely will spatter on boughs and solid trunks. Even if your shots tell there is a big chance of the little beast dying in his arboreal fortress, and the coveted spoils not coming into the hands of the hunters.

That was what we learned when at last we halted breathless on the mountain top, and a few minutes later found ourselves amongst a troop of colobus. We had plunged through a great floral sea. Creepers tripped us up, stinging

nettles breast high stung our arms and hands and legs; now and then we sank down into a soft, mossy pit and clambered out by the aid of branches and monkey ropes. So dense was the canopy that little light came through, but now and then we caught a glimpse of the fleeting colobus, or saw one of these simian squirrels peeping through the hood of his mantle at the intruders on his forest home.

By dint of much hard work and diligent prying four more monkeys were shot that afternoon. One fell on to my coat, and in his dying rage and agony bit and clawed one side of it to threads. The others fell down stone dead. We were weary, stung and aching with the exertion of climbing. Our eyes, too, were full of wood dust that had been brought down by the shots, and so we elected to descend to where our camp lay, far, far down beneath. We still had our toll to take of the colobi, however. I had made up my mind to secure the full six allowed on a £50 licence, for, oh, vanity of vanities! I wished to present them in the form of a muff or a stole in England. By next mid-day, therefore, we had again reached the crest of the mountain, and ere long were amongst the gorgeous monkeys. But on this occasion the colobi were more wily than on the day before, and try as I might I could not get a fair shot at one. And then there happened one of the most extraordinary things that ever has fallen within the range of my experience. In the mountain forest we came across some N'Derobo—the lowest type of mankind in East Africa, people who have no habitations, who live by hunting, and are, in fact, the modern counterpart of our Berserker forefathers. For the promise of a small reward they assisted us

to good purpose in our murderous designs on the monkeys. One of these curious savages clung to the trunk of a tree on the topmost prongs of which a monkey was perched and well-nigh hidden by boughs and leaves. The N'Derobo chattered, and the colobus chattered back. It was a *tête-à-tête* of the monkey folk, and I watched, so intently interested that I well-nigh forgot the loaded 12-bore in my hand. A few seconds elapsed and the monkey man leapt through stinging nettles and over tangled undergrowth to another tree, and there recommenced his prattlings. After him the monkey sped, and as the furry form flew through the air I fired. The colobus fell with an almost sickening thud, and I followed the N'Derobo to where he had recommenced his simian gibberish at the base of another tree monster. Another monkey chattered back, and I longed that Darwin might have been there to witness this strange conversation, so germane to Darwin's great belief. But oh! the treachery of it all! The N'Derobo was again speeding away and again a charge of shot interrupted the following flight of the colobus.

The sun was sinking over the purple brow of Longonot as we emerged from the forest with all the monkey skins that we wished for.

Below us Kijabe and the Kedong Valley, with Mount Margaret and the sparsely bushed plains, lay spread out like a giant map. To-morrow the train would bear us again over the towering wall of the Kikuyu escarpment to Nairobi, to hotels and the madding crowd of those who live with Nature as a neighbour and yet will know her not.

I turned my face to the mountain paths that

coiled and twisted below us, and as the tin roof of Kijabe station came into view out of the quickening gloom, I thought of the N'Derobo and the monkeys, in their primeval mountain home, and I pondered on how little all our Magi ever can teach us. For we white people after all are merely steeplejacks who have climbed to what we regard as the highest pinnacle of existence. Most of our steeples are worthless structures surmounted by phantom weather-cocks, and how little, oh, how little do we know of the real world that lies below the towers of arrogance on which we perch ourselves!

CHAPTER XV

UGANDA: THE DEVIL IN GOD'S GARDEN

On my first journey to East Africa I stayed in Nairobi but a few days and then took train to Molo. That view from the Kikuyu escarpment, with the Great Rift Valley stretching out before me to the far-away Mau, will be for ever impressed on my memory.

Here, where the Ukamba and Naivasha Provinces meet, all in this great cleft and in the distant range of mountains away to the west has an indistinct and blue appearance. But, as the traveller speeds on through rich forests and across the viaducts which bridge the beautiful glades of the escarpments, there come out of the haze mountains and lakes, peaceful farms, and broad cattle ranches. After the purple dome of Longonot, there appear the waters of Lake Naivasha, basking in the afternoon sun, land-locked by purple hills. Through this great rift the Equator runs, but it is hard to abolish ideas of the lochs of Scotland and the lakes of Switzerland from the mind. But here are the true inhabitants of Africa to remind one that the blue waters are those of Naivasha, and not of Loch Katrine or of Lucerne. Further to the west lies the great ridge of the Mau escarpment, where in 1908 I spent some happy weeks hunting topi and Jackson's hartebeeste.

In these escarpments there are to be found

numbers of N'Derobo. Old Sumatwa was one of these. I can picture him now coming down from the forest to the little camp where I was superintending the cutting up of a Jackson's hartebeeste—an old man with long, thin, aged legs striding down the hillside, carefully picking his path, and giving one the impression that he was following a zigzag spoor. Sumatwa's life had been spent in hunting; no hoof-marks missed his eye, no Serval cat bounded away into the long grass but he saw every leap. His dominating passion in life had been the following and killing of game, and into every glance and movement he threw his calling. Game was to him the alpha and omega of existence, and when fresh meat was not to be obtained he would greedily devour the most revolting offal. His overlords, the Masai, said of him and his people, "After the lion comes the hyæna and jackal, then the vulture, and then the N'Derobo." He had no hut, no lasting or even temporary abode. He was a nomad who would tell you but little of himself or his people, and who knew nothing of his history and cared a great deal less.

The day will come when the glorious highlands of western British East Africa will be tenanted by whites from the Uasin Gishu plateau to the northern confines of German East Africa, and, like the wild animals of the forests and plains of that strangely fascinating land, the N'Derobo will die before the advance of civilization.

As the shrouds of romance and abysmal ignorance are raised off the face of Africa, her own innate mysteries will be washed away as the clouds and mists are sometimes lifted off the shy face of Mount Kenia. And so the descendants of old Sumatwa will disappear into the realms

of long ago. A strange people, with an unknown history, their habitation is in those wild mountains which tower above the region of the Great Lakes where the clouds of heaven mingle with the forests of earth. I have watched those clouds waft away over the bamboo-clad slopes of Mount Londiani and the warm face of the sun shine through their fast-disappearing mists, and mentally I have drawn a parallel between the dispersing vapours and the inevitable extinction of the barbaric natives who inhabit these fastnesses. The high altar of civilization demands many sacrifices, and the day is not far distant when the curious children of Sumatwa, with their skin head-dresses, their crudely fashioned garments of hide, and their semi-animal habits, will, like the better-known Maoris and Sioux, be offered up to satisfy the ambitions of an age of advance. Londiani will look down on the world as of yore, the purple dome of Longonot will still raise its head over that great rift in the earth's surface which extends from the Dead Sea to the cleft of Lake Nyasa, but they alone will miss those whom they had known for ages as the inhabitants by law of right of the lovely land lying below them.

Continuing my journey across East Africa, I reached one morning the curious little port of Kisumu or Port Florence on Lake Victoria Nyanza. Recent surveys have indicated that Victoria Nyanza is the largest lake in the world. At any rate, only Superior can dispute its claim, and no other body of inland water possesses such a haunting charm as this does. In the early morning the face of the waters is as placid as a mill-pond. A miniature archipelago of islets, all robed in the gorgeous raiment of the

KAVIRONDO WOMEN ON THE MAU ESCARPMENT

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RIVER NILE, A MILE FROM ITS SOURCE,
NEAR JINJA, UGANDA

Equator, rises above the peaceful lake. "This indeed, is Fairyland," you murmur. A few hours elapse and a cool breath of wind blows across the inland sea. Dark clouds take the place of the brilliant azure of the sky. A brief half-hour speeds by, and the rain comes down as though the reservoirs of the heavens had burst their walls. Angry wavelets instead of tranquil pond, turmoil where peace reigned supreme, tempestial torrents instead of restful blue. "This, indeed, is tropical rage," you remark, amazed at the rapidity of the change.

On the eastern shores, where Kisumu nestles below the towering cliffs of the Nandi escarpment, the Kavirondo roam naked and unashamed. They are the most moral tribe of the Victoria Nyanza region. On the northern side, where Great Britain administers Uganda at Entebbe, and the old native kingdom has its capital at Kampala, the Baganda, white-robed and enlightened, live in an atmosphere of culture. They are the Japanese of Africa. Southwards Germany has peopled the lake shores with true sons of the Fatherland. In white ducks and tall helmets they mingle with Baziba barbarians, and send the produce of their farms and plantations across the lake to the terminus of the Uganda Railway.

On the great water modern steamships with clean-clad naval officers cut across the bows of native craft, lateen-sailed and crowded. A twentieth-century railway runs down to the water on the eastern side, and on the west you may reach the slopes of the Mountains of the Moon by ricksha and porters. This is, indeed, a land of contrasts, and perhaps the greatest contrast of all is the old, old Nile flowing northwards

to the land of the Pharaohs from this heart of commercialized Africa. The mother river of North Africa tumbles over the Ripon Falls and wends its way to the Mediterranean as calmly independent as it did when the Mamelukes ruled Egypt, as little perturbed at the advent of the steam-engine and the Powers of Europe as is the sun at the flight of an aeroplane.

There are few more productive themes of fancy than to ponder on the life-story of a great river, to conjure up visions of the nations it has nurtured, the fleets of conquest it has floated, the years of famine and plenty that its caprices have borne. And especially is this true of the Nile.

I remember sitting one evening on a little mound overlooking the first flow of Nile water in Usoga. The roar of the torrent over the lip of Nyanza came from behind me as the breaking of the surf on the pebbled beach, and the gentle rhythm of the flowing waters over a myriad of miniature cascades, through a multitude of little swirling whirlpools, northwards ever northwards, sounded faint and indistinct like the bells on cattle sound when church chimes are pealing their loudest on a quiet English Sunday evening. Across the Ripon Falls spurwinged geese hastened their sundown flight. The trees on either side of the river took on the sombre gown of eve, and the rocks which break the flow of the waters, and which in the light of midday had seemed gaunt and ugly, grew soft and picturesque as night fell over hill-wreathed sea, laughing river and tropic shore. A slender thread of silver twisted in and out of the lovely land: the Nile at the first milestone on its troubled flight to the blue of the Mediterranean.

Darkness came like a cloud on the scene, but still the turmoil of the waters thundered from the falls, and still that wondrous picture of the birth of the world's most famous river was clear before me. Flashes of lightning now and then brightened the Northern sky, and seemed to call to the river to fly from the heathen darkness of Nyanza to the cradle of the world's learning. They talk of harnessing the Ripon Falls in these days of commercial vandalism. Nile water as it leaps from the womb of Victoria Nyanza is to drive turbines! What sacrilege! What an infamous disregard for one of the most monumental works of Nature!

There are many other scenes of the Victoria Nyanza region which are indelibly impressed on my memory. But undoubtedly the most beautiful of all is the view from the hill which overlooks Entebbe. There below you nestles the toy capital, an outpost of Empire in Lotus Land. Bungalows lie buried in a riot of glorious colour, wreathed in a maze of heliotrope and crimson, for the flower-beds of Entebbe are tended by the head gardener of God, and the emerald hue of the verdant background could only have been painted by the Creator Himself. Cast your eyes a little farther, and the deep blue lagoon-like arms of the lake channel into the luscious landscape. Entebbe is indeed an emerald gem set in a sapphire sea, a vision of loveliness which might make Killarney envious.

At night the Soudanese sentries pace the landing-stage, and their hoarse challenges mingle with the gentle lapping of the lake. A myriad fireflies flit across the warm sweet air and light the scene with fairy lanterns. It all seems so lovely, but there is the poison of the nightshade in

the atmosphere. Eleven years ago a great cloud of death fell on Uganda. It had swept across the Congo forests, and it set a seal of doom on a thousand islets and habitations in this modern Garden of Eden. Sleeping sickness has devastated much of the Victoria Nyanza region. Mengo, Kampala, Jinja, Entebbe, Munyonyo and Lozeras have all come under its awful ban. In a few brief years the Sese islands have been well-nigh depopulated, and the shores of the inland sea have cried to Heaven for deliverance. It seems as though the plagues of the Pharaohs have hastened down the Nile to stay the advance of modern days, and well they have succeeded. The heat of the Equator and the pestilence of the sleep of death have held this Tropical Protectorate safe from the prying eyes of the tourist season.

It has been well written—

> " All things in some divine
> And wish'd for way, conspire as
> Nature knows,
> To some great good."

Perhaps in the case of Uganda, where the native asks and answers in the super-polite phrases of Tokio, the deadly palpalis fly conspires to some great good, for this jewel of the interior would lose much of its bounteous brilliance were the hands of all men to weigh its worth. And so it nestles in its own unsullied wreath of beauty, and hides its charms beneath a holocaust.

CHAPTER XVI

EGYPT: TO THE CELESTIAL CITY

It had for long been my desire to see something of the land of the Pharaohs, and at last in 1911 my wish was gratified and I landed at Suez.

Egypt! The very word is a charm. It conjures up visions of ensaffroned sunsets, of stately palms bowing to the desert wind, of living cities gorgeous in their Oriental splendour, of buried cities musty with the myrrh of millenniums. Wondrous, wondrous country! How many have followed your piping even as the children of Hamelin followed the Piper and were stolen away? How few who have seen your true beauty have not hankered to know more, to drink to the full of the nectar of the Pharaohs? *Qui a bu de l'eau du Nil veut en reboire.*

It is when we come on a new land, where all is strange and beautiful, that something seems to call to us from childhood's days, something that tells us to forget trouble and toil, something that seems to turn our worries into rocking-horses, and make us boys and girls again. There is no other on the face of earth that can charm away the cobwebs of life as can Egypt. She is the nursery-land of all the nations. Five thousand years before the advent of Christ, when all else was wild and barbaric and uncultured, Egypt had knowledge of arts so wondrous

that even the great brains of to-day can only ponder on them. Egypt taught the world when the nations were young. She was a wise governess and she rocked dynasties in her cradle. She is a nursery-land to-day, when the world has grown old and joyless. She can take us by the hand as though the nations were again little children. She can draw smiles from those who have lost their moods of mirth, she can charm the most *blasé* with her gorgeous toys.

Where the soft warm air blows from off the bosom of the slumbering desert, where the lateen sails dip to the silvery Nile, where colours play at riot and skies are sapphire blue, this is the garden wherein the old may feel young again, where the young may feel younger, and the dying spirit may regain all that is worth living for. For there is that in Egypt to do all this. There is the panacea of Paracelsus which is called Azoth—the joyous tincture of life.

The Desert Express left Suez with its flat-topped houses and the blue gulf of the sea behind, and tore across the sands. Egypt is a land of deep rich colours; the glaucous green of the date-palm, the silvery sheen of the Nile, the golden red of the desert. Shades and shadows, glare, and soft subdued light, conflict with each other, but there is always that background of golden red, the colour of the desert, the living blush of dead Pharaohs. It is the tint that ever mirrors on the Nile, intensifies the glory of the moonlight, or regilds the golden glamour of the dying sun. Those mountain ranges which look down on Suez from the west give the visitor to Egypt from the south his first impression of this glorious all-pervading undertone, and when they are lost to sight there is the vastness of the plain of sands,

with here and there a camel caravan to give added romance to the scene.

Many centuries ago Herodotus wrote of Egypt as "the gift of the Nile." That is as true of Egypt to-day as it was when Rome was master of the world. Over six thousand years ago the Egyptians lived by the mercy of that river which rises in the distant heart of Equatoria, and spreads each twelve months a layer of alluvial sediment, bears down gravel from the Abyssinian mountains, and lays a kindly covering of rich earth over barren rock and desert sand. In Coptic, Egypt was called "Kemi," which means "black-land," and any one who journeys to-day from Suez to the capital may see how true it is that Egypt is still, and ever will be, but the offering to a needful humanity of a mighty Providence and a noble river.

It is after the desert battlefield of Tel-el-Kebir, with its sand-dunes and trenches, has been crossed, that the wondrous fertility of Lower Egypt manifests itself in countless acres of brilliant green lucerne, of clover, and beans and lentils. Egypt, too, was the home of the papyrus, which in days gone by supplied costly writing-paper for the world, but in these times the cotton-plant and the sugar-cane have superseded it. This is one of the most wonderfully irrigated tracts of country in the whole world, this gift land of the paternal river. Millions of little canals, aqueducts and waterways carry the precious fluid to the fruitful acres cultivated by the fellaheen. Here and there picturesque old water-wheels give an added touch of Egypt the old, the mysterious, the entrancing, to the landscape. Now and then one catches glimpses of felucca sails,

The town of Zagazig, on a branch of the sweet-water canal which connects Ismailia with the Nile, is passed, and ere long Cairo is in sight, the Citadel and Heliopolis claim your eyes, the Mamelukes, Rameses, Pharaohs and Meneptah take form out of the soft glowing light.

The mellow magnificence of the full moon rising in the evening sky threw a flood of soft light over the city that lay below me, and bathed the mosques, the domes, the minarets, the bazaars, the temples of the mighty and the hovels of the humble in a sheen of silken splendour. I stood on the terrace of the great mosque of Mohamed Ali at the Citadel, and gazed fascinated at the wonder-city of Cairo, the northern sentinel of Africa, where the East and the West meet and a tongue of barbaric flame leaps up from the South to kindle fresh fires of fantasy. Cairo, city of celestial charms! city of a thousand minarets and a million worshippers, city steeped in Eastern sin and Western vice! city where the camel collides with the taxi-cab, and the gorgeous modernity of the Semiramis Hotel looks out on the patriarchal beauty of the old, old Nile and the eternal riddle of the questioning Sphinx! There is an indefinable something about Cairo which grips the senses as in a vice and makes imagination throb and quiver. The spirits of all the Pharaohs and all the Mamelukes for ever brood over the modern Heliopolis, and whether it be an ancient fellah pressing you to buy a scarab or a dragoman in resplendent raiment escorting you to Shepheard's—one of the most famous of all hostels—there is an undertone of fairy talk in every pleading, a substratum of

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CAIRO: THE PORCH OF SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL

antiquity and wonder in every inch of every pathway.

From my perch at the Citadel I could just distinguish the silver thread of the Nile twisting like a spangled serpent. To my right the great mass of the alabaster mosque towered moonwards. The muezzins had ceased their callings to the Faithful, and the hush of Allah had fallen over the city below.

I feel sorry for the man whose soul is so bereft of imagination that he could have looked on Cairo that evening and not seen phantoms of the past dancing round the city. I feel more sorry still for the mind so barren of real joy that could have looked up into the soft dome of the evening sky and not felt thrilled with the sheer beauty of the thing; sky and stately minaret, evening glory and snow-white mosque. These are things which make one realize how leaden are our Western ways, how sullen, and gray and forbidding are our lives and our monuments. Our Western world has envied Egypt her beauty and her slumbers, and has tried to steal them, and Egypt has borne the invasion with a spirit of sublime tolerance.

Modern Cairo is the fashionable centre of the East. The wealthy of three continents winter there and bask in the Egyptian sunshine, and feast and drink and make merry. But for all the modern splendour of the hotels, for all the demi-mondaines who have migrated along the sun-path from every city in Europe, Cairo retains all her old-day mysteries, all her archaic glory. The motor-car has not defaced her antiquity, the cradle of the world's learning has not lost a single shaft of light from her hoary halo

because a few high-living mortals are mocking her age.

If you would see that spirit of great age revealed in all the mystery of time and stone, go out to the mystic Sphinx and ponder on the years. That inscrutable watcher on the desert sands was old when the world was young, and had grown worn and rugged with the sands of time when the Wise Men came to Bethlehem and angels in the sky proclaimed the Nativity. Tradition has it that the Infant Christ was laid between the feet of the effigy by Mary and Joseph when the holy Family fled to Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod. Those mighty feet, which might have guarded the King of Christendom, have long since been hidden by the sands. More than half the Sphinx is to-day buried beneath the rising floor of the desert. But still the extraordinary face stares out as though it could laugh at time and eternity and the infinite, though the hour-glass of centuries has covered some of its fantastic grandeur.

One feels as one gazes on the Sphinx and on the great Pyramids of stone—fitting companions for the colossal image—that these things are older than creation, that the sardonic face must have been there to gaze on the first grains of the desert sand; that the first bird that flew into the Garden of the World must have seen with wonder the mighty top of the Pyramid of Cheops and longed to fly round the pinnacle.

It is almost impossible to believe that men and women exist who cannot ponder on and marvel at these grim giants of a monumental epoch, and yet there are such; people who trip gaily each year to violate the vigil of the Sphinx, who, I verily believe, feel disappointed that the figure

is not robed in a hobble skirt, people who mock the Pyramids and would see a beer-hall perched on the topmost summit.

But Egypt can laugh at all the vandalism of all the vandal world. You place tramcars in the streets of Cairo, but you cannot drive the camel and the kohl-tinted peasant from her. You may deck the porches of her luxurious hotels with the modern finery of Paris, but only the eyes that peer at you over the yashmaks will be always in your mind.

Egypt is a land for the dreamer, for the lover of a great slumbering silence, for the worshipper of the sun. Thoth travelled in the Boat of the Sun, and so will you when you visit the land of the date-palm and the slumbering Nile. If your life has been prosaic, Egypt will set it tingling with the rhythm of new conceptions. If each one of your years has writhed and quivered, Egypt will regild your joyous dreams, soften your nightmares, make you forget your carking cares.

You who have ghosts to lay to rest, bury them in the golden depths of the Libyan sands. You who would seek new paths in the careworn walk of life, seek them where the Pharaohs ruled, where the sunsets glow, and life has lustre and love and light. Lend yourself to Egypt for a while, and let her mesmerize you with her subtle charms. For this is a land that was born like a lovely woman, to delight and entrance.

CHAPTER XVII

EGYPT (CONTINUED): DREAMS OF THE DESERT

THE Egyptian State Railways Express whirled out of Cairo station—Ismailia bound. Date-palms and peasant villages were wrapped in gloom, and I lay back in the corner of my comfortable coach and slumbered. It had been a day of gorgeous brilliance, and the memories of the giant, sombre Pyramids, of the eternal watcher on the desert sands, of the lazy, languid Nile, and the wonder city bathed in moonlight below the alabaster mosque, lulled me into delicious dreamland. Again the great stone pile of Cheops loomed up before me, and the silence of the ceaseless sands seized earth and sky in a great irresistible embrace of stillness; such a stillness as must follow the last trump of doom, when all the living things of earth have been called to the throne of judgment.

And then it seemed that the face of the great Pyramid was cleft in two, and the figure of a man emerged from the tomb of rent rocks. He was tall and handsome, and scorn played on his sharp features.

"Who are you?" he asked, and I knew not what to answer.

He turned his withering gaze from me for a moment and looked where the strange old Sphinx kept everlasting vigil. And then he raised his eyes towards the Pyramids of Sakkara and the site of Memphis.

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THE GREAT PYRAMID OF CHEOPS

Osiris, judge of the dead, and Isis and Aelurus were with him. In death his gods had not deserted him.

He turned and faced me again, and the mystery of the whole scene set me a-trembling.

"I am Meneptah," he said; and his voice seemed to thunder across the desert as though it would echo and re-echo to the edge of the world.

"I was the ruler of all this land," he continued; "I caused these monuments to be built," and he waved his hands around till he had denoted each of the great Pyramids—Cheops and Chephren and the seven smaller colossal structures of Gizeh, built over the sepulchral chamber of those who reigned in Egypt more than fifty centuries ago.

He looked proudly at the great towering piles of stone, and for a while he seemed forgetful of my poor presence. His gods glared at me with true godly anger.

"What think you of my land?" he queried at last. Aghast at the wonder of his resurrection, I murmured that it was beautiful and fair and vastly interesting.

"Beautiful and fair and vastly interesting," he repeated after me, and a sad smile crossed the corners of his proud mouth. "And think you that you moderns have made it more beautiful or more fair or more interesting?" he asked, and a subterranean fire seemed to burn his throat and flare and flicker in his dark, searching eyes.

"Have you increased the majesty of my tombs or drawn more solemnity from the silent watcher, because you have built a hotel to disturb our desert sleep? Have you not defiled our

sepulchres, transported our inscriptions, our very gods, to heathen lands across the seas, robbed us even of our noble dead?"

He paused for a moment, and the aged dignity of his wrath left me without answer. I could only gaze in fascinated fear at the son of Rameses. He that proud Pharaoh who was the essential factor for evil in the Book of Exodus.

He raised a finger to the great Pyramid. "Have you anything so great, so vast, so colossal in your modern world as that?" he asked; and there was danger lurking in the tone of his interrogation.

I thought for a moment of St. Paul's, but the Colossus of Cheops is higher than the House of God that Wren built. So I feebly gave expression to one of the enigmas of the centuries: "How did you build them?"

"By the shoulders and hands of slaves," he answered, pardoning the sorriness of my reply.

"We have no slaves in the world to-day," I ventured.

"No?" the traveller from the age of world-dawn remarked; and there was a stinging scorn in the softness of that "No." I gained a little courage.

"Slavery," I said, "is a stain of sin on the raiment of our modern righteousness, and we have washed it out. There are no more slaves."

"You are a slave," said Meneptah, and there was a world of disdain for the arrogance of my modern pride in his voice. "You are all slaves. Why do you work? Because you are all serfs, because circumstance and the cruel world are your masters, and they say to you, work or you shall not eat bread, labour or you shall not rest, toil or you must die. I have rested in

my sarcophagus through all the ages. I have seen Emperors rise and Dynasties fall. I have seen that subtle, irresistible weed of modernity growing in my gardens, and I have been powerless to pluck it. It has choked the lovely blooms of idleness, the buds of joy have been withered; and I see strange flowers growing in their stead, the deadly nightshades of trouble and toil and tribulation have prospered with the weed, and the vermiliary glare of the poppy of insanity becomes more all-pervading every day. They are all growing in your garden," he continued; and the earnestness of his clarion voice made me throb with that strange sense of discomfort which comes to one when his ears must listen to what he knows is the reality of a pitiable truth.

"Look," he continued, "and I will show you that the slavery of your great, teeming, civilized cities is more degrading, more tedious, more wearying, than ever were the labours of those who raised up my treasure cities of Pithom and Rameses."

Thereupon he raised his hand, and I saw old Cairo and Memphis, and the countless millions who toiled and made bricks of clay and straw. They laboured under the smile of the god Thoth. Their task-masters were often cruel and flogged them with long whips. Yet their words seemed smiles and sunshine; the gift of the Nile was full of plenty, and the universe seemed to sing for the very joy of youth.

The scene changed for a moment, and I saw another vast city and another great river, scurrying past crowded wharves and soot-stained warehouses. It was night, and a cold rain fell—on sloppy pavements, in troubled pools of mud,

and splashed where the flicker of the street-lamps threw a mournful shred of light.

I saw the serfs of modernity, some toiling in great, gaunt prisons, which for want of better name were called offices. I saw men and women and children, ragged and dirty and hungry, lying cold on doorsteps, stretched in unutterable squalor and misery by the side of that maternal river. I saw rich men tire of their riches and scatter their brains on costly carpets. I saw lovely women sickened by the empty mockery of their existence poison themselves and lie stark and cold, with agony written on their demented faces.

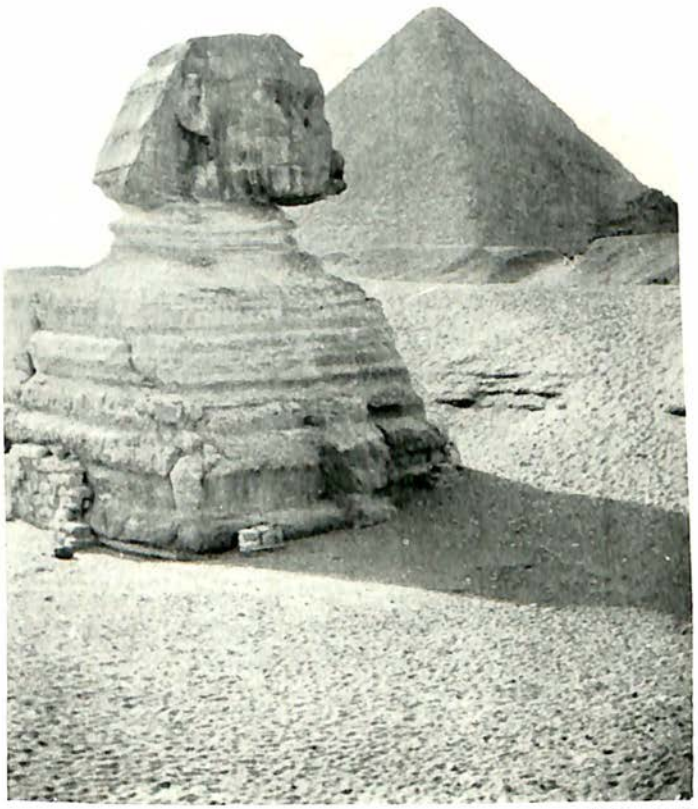
I heard children speak of the unutterable sins as though they were boxes of wooden bricks. I heard the boom of battle and the Babel of all nations. I saw chaos and the world in its dotage.

"Well?" said Meneptah, and there was that in his voice which made me wonder whether he had more of sorrow than of contempt for me and mine.

"What think you? Do you worship false gods, or did I? Hathor or Mammon? Aphroditopolis or your centres of advancement?"

I knew not what to say, and the figure who had come down from the stone-girt heart of his tomb to teach me wisdom expected no reply.

"I lived when the world was young and the fires of youth tingled in every vein," he said. "You have your being in the age of care and circumstance. The blood of the earth has run cold, the feet of men are faltering in darkness, and in your folly you call it light. You sorrow for what you call the barbarism of my dynasty. I pity you the sombre cruelty of what you term civilization.



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THE SILENT WATCHER

"Oh, joyous barbarism! Give me back the sunshine of my monarchy!" and his gods cried with him in chorus, "Give us back our barbarism!"

Again I saw a rent in the Great Pyramid. A fire burned brightly within, and the proud philosopher of all the ages clasped his hands before him and walked into the flames. The massive blocks of stone leaped towards one another and the vision of Meneptah was no more.

I looked towards the sad, worn, sardonic face of the Sphinx. Still the silent watcher peered through eternity as though those eyes of stone would foresee the day of judgment. Just for a moment I saw a smile steal over the inscrutable countenance—such a smile as a wise man might give a child who has talked to him of philosophy's alphabet; and then the smile was gone, and the moon looked down and seemed in some strange way to hold communion with the brooding Sphinx and the illimitable sands.

We raced along the side of that gigantic cut through the earth which is known as the Suez Canal, the rift in the sandy isthmus from the Red Sea to the Delta, first excavated by the second Rameses, re-opened by Darius the Persian, and again by the Moslem conquerors. Every schoolboy has read of de Lesseps, whose master-mind consummated the project conceived so very long ago, and made it a magnificent success for modern shipping. His statue guards the northern entrance to the canal, seems to brood over the enormity of the commerce that his fertile brain developed, and proclaims to all who pass this road that Port Said was his creation. The town is a reclamation from the desolate land

that lies between Lake Menzaleh and the Mediterranean, and lives on the trade of the canal.

It was towards this cosmopolis that the midnight express tore along. Great liners with blazing head-lights all aglow with electric brilliance were passed, and we were soon at the northern terminus of the canal; we had reached what is generally termed the wickedest town of the world.

It was two o'clock in the morning, and we drank coffee and smoked glorious cigarettes outside a café, what time a Turkish acrobat turned nimble somersaults. Port Said never sleeps. It is a half-way house to the Orient, a quaint seaport made by the genius of one man, and he has no reason to be proud of his creation. The East and the West and Paganism all come together at Port Said. The sins of the world find expression in this shameless seaport, the iniquities of earth assemble here to revel.

Commerce and vice are curiously intertwined. Here vessels may coal and halt awhile ere they continue their voyages to the lands of the rising sun. It is an ocean rest-house. Here are agencies of all the great steamship companies, coal companies, representatives of the merchant princes of the East, and the sumptuous dome-capped offices of the Suez Canal Company. Port Said is on the highway of the seas, and all ocean passengers to and from India, China, Japan, East Africa and Australia, must pass her gates.

Sin has a half-way house here as well as Commerce. This is a forwarding station in the traffic of the white slaves, a place that drains Europe of its immoral surplus, a distributing centre for the houses of shame that lie east of Suez. The fairest, least-soiled goods in this

loathsome trade are all in transit. They are not displayed in the shop-windows of the foul-smelling streets and dark alleyways of Satan, the landlord of all this seaport.

For a time they are stored away "in bond" as well as in bondage. Their days come and they sail away. They sink into the slough of the Orient, and some come back in the fulness of the years. They are no longer fair to look on, unless the shop-window of life is gilded and curtained and made to throw some of its own brilliance on the painted goods behind the gaudy glass. It is then that their sorry souls are put up for auction in this seaport of shame.

Many of these wrecks of womanhood, these misled wretches who have uprooted the choicest flower that God planted in His garden, have brought back all the suffering and sin of the East with them. They are not women—they are harpies, vultures with women's breasts and women's faces. They have sold their lives for gold, and the gold melted away as rapidly as did their good looks. Milton must have had such in mind when he penned those lines in *Paradise Lost*—

> "Woman to the waist and fair,
> But ending foul in many a scaly fold
> Voluminous and vast; a serpent armed
> With mortal sting."

A woman's face is not always her fortune, as the nursery rhyme has it of the dairymaid. It is as often her yoke of misery. Many a broken soul has reviled the good God who gave her comeliness and beauty. Port Said is full of what were once women whose greatest curse was the possession of a pretty face. These are the

trade goods that entered many an Eastern port "duty free." Their duty to womenkind they knew not, their duty to their employers terminated only when the cup of degradation had been drained to the last shameful dregs.

There are little side streets in Port Said where the red lights of infamy burn all night, wherein a man may well get his throat cut without the asking for it. There are vile photographers who live in vile back passages. There are black-faced guides who for a few piastres will lead you to houses of dance and song, to passages that would have shamed Sodom and Gomorrah.

It is hard to realize that the same moon that throws a soft sheen of splendour over the pure grace of the date-palm looks down on all this sullying sin. It is difficult to believe that the same sun that is throwing halos of light over the desert warns the demons of the night that their riotousness must cease. It is a strange old world, and it has always seemed to me that the most inexplicable of all its mysteries is typified in the growth of a buttercup and a stinging-nettle together. And yet they do. The same rain that refreshes the flower-beds of a palace may flood a floral slum. Sin and sanctity may breathe the same air and both may live.

Were you a Martian without knowledge of the great riddles, the immense illogicals of this world, you would never believe that Port Said could exist in a land nursed and tended by the noble Nile.

CHAPTER XVIII

FINIS

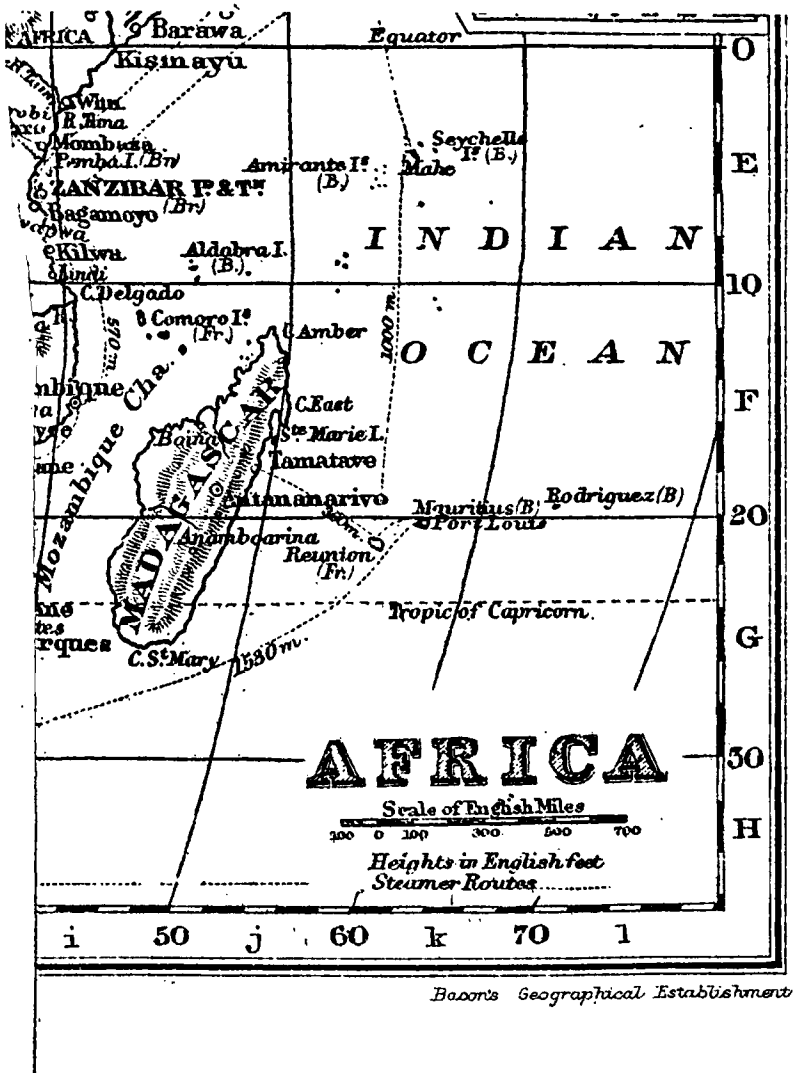
NINE years of my life had been spent in Africa when at last I saw the northern coast of Morocco fade away into the blue of the horizon. Each of those years had drawn me closer to this vast continent. Africa with her mystery, her freedom, her untrammelled spaces, and her barbarism had become my mistress, and I turned my face to the North and the coast of Spain with a regret softened by the knowledge that in a short space of time I should set foot again on her savage soil. The bonds had but been released for a few weeks. Those shackles so subtly forged are not fetters that easily are cast aside for all time. I, for one, will ever return a willing slave to worship at the shrine of the exquisite goddess of Paganism who rules the Last Continent.

But two short months went by and I turned my back on Gibraltar and held out my hands in a token of submission to those northern shores that creep down from the Atlas Range to bathe in the brilliant blue of the Mediterranean, and but a few weeks later the snow pinnacles of Kenia were above me and the glory of the morning made me sing for very joy that I was again in serfdom.

For what did I return? Perhaps the spirit of this book may answer. If this dedication to a

land that holds men enraptured through the cheerless dawn of a fever bed in the wilderness, and beckons them away from all that culture and enlightenment proclaim as the joy of living, be dumb, then must I shake my head in the knowledge that no words of mine can ever frame a reply. Africa, where the women have no beauty, the birds no song, the flowers no scent, and the rivers no water. How often have I listened to that elaborate condemnation! How true at first I thought it all was! But with the flight of years there has come to me an appreciation of the beauty of the ill-featured women, I can hear music in the cry of the Lourie, even the thorny aloe contains a perfume, and I think a dried-up stream-bed can float for me more charming fancies than the soot-stained waters of the Thames.

Thus have I learned my Africa.



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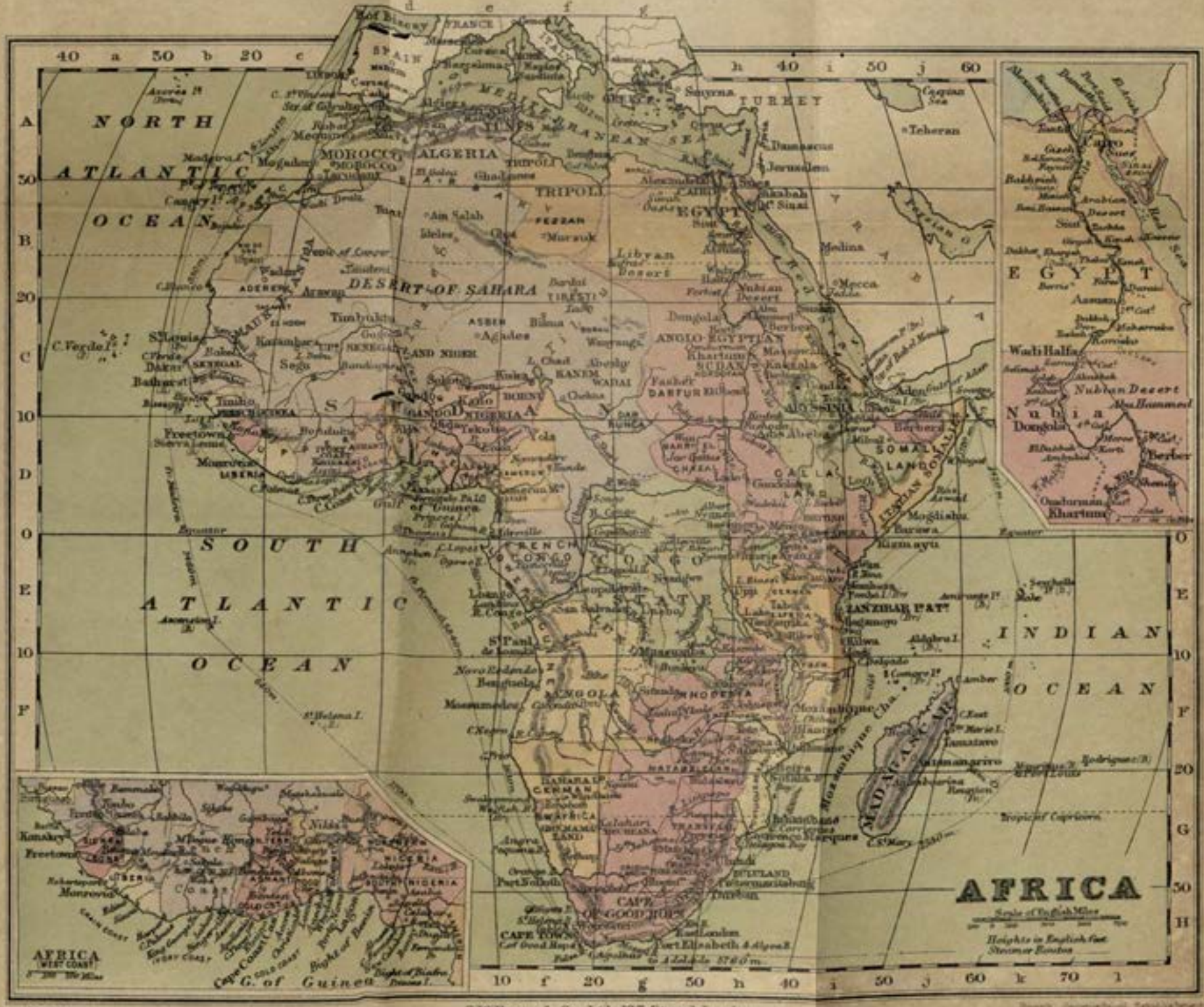

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